

Which Women Can Run? Gender, Partisanship, and Candidate Donor Networks

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Abstract

Recent scholarship rejects campaign finance as a cause of women's underrepresentation in Congress because women raise as much money as men running in similar races. We argue that campaign finance still impacts which women can make a run for office because candidates have to build their own donor networks. Using a unique dataset that includes primary and general election candidates for the U.S. House in 2010 and 2012, we examine the gender composition of candidates' donor networks. We find that candidates' ideological views are very important to contributors. Donors, particularly Democrats, also exhibit a gender affinity effect in which men give more to male candidates and women favor female candidates. Furthermore, female Democratic donors seem to value the election of women, especially liberal Democratic women, over other traditional predictors of giving, such as incumbency and competitiveness. Meanwhile, Republican male and female donors do not focus on candidate gender, and female Republican donors prefer conservative candidates. Thus, the existing partisan donor pools are friendlier to the emergence of liberal female Democrats than Republican women.

Keywords

gender and politics, Congress, elections, campaign finance, donor networks, ideology

It is well known that women are underrepresented in the U.S. Congress, constituting only 19 percent of House members and 20 percent of Senators (Center for American Women and Politics [CAWP] 2016). However, there is also a distinct partisan skew in women's representation as the number of Democratic women in Congress far outpaces the number of Republican women. The disparity emerged in the 1992 "Year of the Woman" elections and continues to grow. In the current 114th Congress, women constitute 33 percent of the House Democratic caucus but only 9 percent of the Republican caucus (CAWP 2016). Recent scholarship rejects campaign finance as a cause of women's underrepresentation in Congress because women raise as much money as men running in similar races. However, we argue that the composition of the parties' electoral coalitions and the candidate-centered nature of campaign fundraising make it easier for particular candidates to run.

This article provides the first in-depth examination of the gender of campaign donors giving itemized individual donations. We use a unique dataset that includes primary and general election candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives in 2010 and 2012 to examine the gender composition of candidates' donor networks. Analyzing both successful and failed primary challenger, open seat,

and incumbent candidates provides a better picture of the gender and partisan differences in the donor networks of male and female candidates. Given the increasing polarization of Congress and the research consensus that donors are more extreme than average voters, we also pay special attention to candidate ideology. Rather than inferring the preferences of donors through the aggregate activity of women's political action committees (PACs), we track the total amount of donations candidates receive from male and female donors.

In line with previous research, we find that the ideological views of candidates are important to individual donors. Moreover, donors exhibit a gender affinity effect that is especially strong among Democrats, with female donors favoring Democratic women and male donors more likely to give to Democratic men. Furthermore, Democratic female donors appear to value the election of

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liberal Democratic women over other traditional predictors of fundraising support, including incumbency and competitiveness of the race. By contrast, candidate gender is largely irrelevant to Republican donors. Neither male nor female Republican donors place any special emphasis on electing Republican women, and female Republican donors prefer more conservative candidates. The results suggest that Republican women candidates must be able to raise money from the same donors as Republican men. Consequently, the existing individual donor pool is friendlier to the emergence of liberal female Democrats than Republican women.

Fundraising and Women Candidates

American elections are unique in the amount of money that candidates must raise and spend to win office (Herrnson 2012; Jacobson 2013). Indeed, in the 2012 elections, the average House winner spent more than \$1.5 million (Center for Responsive Politics 2014). Furthermore, congressional campaigns are highly candidate-centered. Particularly in the primary phase, when political parties are reluctant to endorse, candidates must build their own donor networks to demonstrate their viability. A strong fundraising profile sends a signal to the party and allied groups who may then be convinced to mobilize their donor networks to help a candidate (Jacobson 2013; La Raja and Schaffner 2015). Yet, we know very little about the composition of candidates' donor networks and how they may vary based on the partisanship and gender of the candidate. Do male Republican challengers draw more support from male donors than female Republican challengers? Do female Democratic incumbents receive more support from female donors than male Democratic incumbents, or do all Democratic incumbents share similar donor profiles based on the value of incumbency?

Despite the increasing attention to Super PACs and other independent expenditure organizations, most of a House candidate's money comes from individual donations, particularly the large itemized donations of \$200 or more for which information about the donor must be reported to the Federal Election Commission (FEC; Herrnson 2012; Jacobson 2013). Itemized donations are especially important for open seat and challenger candidates who do not have the benefit of incumbency. In 2010, incumbents received 44 percent of their contributions from large individual contributions while challengers collected 50 percent, and open seat candidates raised 58 percent of their receipts from large individual contributions (Herrnson 2012). As more women run as challengers and in open seats, the need to attract individual donors is even more acute, heightening our need to understand the types of women candidates that can cultivate partisan donors. We take a closer look at these large individual donations

by examining the gender composition of candidates' donor pools to see whether candidate gender and ideology impact the willingness of partisan donors to invest in particular candidates.

Women in the Political Arena Raise as Much Money as Men

Rather than digging into donor networks to illuminate which women candidates can build a donor base, the majority of research on gender and campaign finance compares the overall fundraising of male and female candidates to determine whether campaign finance contributes to the dearth of women in office. Although surveys indicate that women candidates express more concerns about their ability to attract donors (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2014; Hogan 2007), most research finds that once one accounts for seat type, female candidates raise just as much money as their male counterparts. As a result, Republican and Democratic women remain underrepresented because they are more likely to run as challengers or in open seats rather than because they have difficulty raising funds (Barber, Butler, and Preece 2016; Burrell 1994, 2014; Fiber and Fox 2005; Green 2003; Hogan 2007).

However, much of this research focuses only on general election candidates or subsets of general election candidates such as open seat races (Burrell 1994, 2014; Fiber and Fox 2005; Green 1998). We know little about gender differences in the fundraising networks of primary candidates. Moreover, most current studies examine the impact of party and sex separately but do not interact partisanship and gender to delve into differences across Republican and Democratic men and women (see, for example, Burrell 1994; Fiber and Fox 2005; Green 1998, 2003). Among the few studies examining primary candidates, Burrell (2014) finds that women who ran in open seat primaries between 1994 and 2010 raised as much or more money than male open seat candidates. However, Burrell's analysis does not examine partisan differences among the candidates. Looking at the differential experiences of male and female Republican and Democratic candidates, Kitchens and Swers (2016) find that only Democratic women running in primaries raise more money than similarly situated men. By contrast, while female Republicans as a group collect as much money as similarly situated male Republicans, the female Republican quality candidates who have previously run for office raise less than their male counterparts, indicating gender disparities among the most viable Republican candidates.

Individual Donors and Women Candidates

With respect to individual donations, most studies examine aggregate donation levels rather than analyzing the composition of donor networks. These studies provide

initial evidence that certain women candidates are more able to appeal to individual donors. Scholars find that among male and female candidates, only Democratic women garner more individual contributions (Crespin and Dietz 2010; Dabelko and Herrnsen 1997; Kitchens and Swers 2016). Moreover, Democratic women raise more of their individual donations from small donors of less than \$200, signaling that the donor network of these Democratic women is different than the donor networks of other candidates (Crespin and Dietz 2010). This success with individual donors is often attributed to the fact that Democratic women benefit from female donor networks in the form of women's PACs such as EMILY's List. Thus, Crespin and Dietz (2010) note that women candidates who did not get money from women's PACs did not raise more money in individual donations, and Francia (2001) finds that only Democratic women who received early money from women's PACs earned more contributions and a higher percentage of the vote in their races. However, these studies are limited by the fact that they only examine general election candidates and they infer the behavior of donors by relying on a dichotomous indicator of whether candidates receive donations from women's PACs (Crespin and Dietz 2010) or aggregating the donations of women's PACs (Francia 2001). By looking exclusively at PAC money, they are not able to examine the behavior of the full universe of male and female donors nor do they incorporate candidates who lose their primaries.

While women candidates, particularly Democratic women, may benefit from female donor networks, the vast majority of donors are men (Bryner and Weber 2013; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Burrell 2014). Indeed, women constituted only about 25 percent and 30 percent of donors in 2010 and 2012, respectively (Bryner and Weber 2013; National Council for Research on Women, Center for American Women and Politics, and Center for Responsive Politics 2014). Surveys indicate that women are more occasional donors than men and that women donate smaller amounts than men do (Bryner and Weber 2013; Burrell 2014; National Council for Research on Women, Center for American Women and Politics, and Center for Responsive Politics 2014). Given that most donors are men, it is important to understand the types of candidates that can build a fundraising network.

Recent scholarship highlights the importance of ideology as a motivating force for individual donors. Today's donors generally give for purposive reasons rather than for social or material benefit, and these contributors care deeply about ideological agreement on issues (Barber 2016a; Francia et al. 2003; Francia et al. 2005). Analyses of candidate funding indicate that more extreme candidates raise a higher proportion of their funds from

individual donations (Boatright 2013; Ensley 2009; Johnson 2010). Individual donors also respond to strategic partisan concerns seeking to donate to competitive races that will maximize the number of seats for their party (Boatright 2013; Francia et al. 2003; Francia et al. 2005). An increasing number of individual contributions come from outside a candidate's district (Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz 2008), and these nonresident donors are part of established party fundraising networks. Yet, more work needs to be done to understand the composition of candidates' fundraising networks and how these networks might vary depending on the gender and partisanship of the candidate.

The Impact of Gender and Partisanship on Candidate Donor Networks

There is little research to date on the composition of candidates' donor networks or the variation in these networks among male and female Democratic and Republican candidates. It is clear that today's donors are motivated by ideology and partisanship, supporting candidates with whom they agree on issues and candidates who will expand the number of House seats controlled by their party (Francia et al. 2003; Francia et al. 2005; Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz 2008; Johnson 2010). Because gender is a prominent feature in the ideological divide that characterizes contemporary partisan politics, we expect that in addition to party affiliation and ideological views, a candidate's gender will have an impact on the mix of support he or she receives from male and female donors.

We expect that female candidates will receive greater support from female donors, on average, than their male partisan counterparts. If the candidate-donor network originates from a candidate's connections in the community, then female candidates are more likely than male candidates to have links to other women in their business and social networks (Francia et al. 2003). Similarly, male candidates should receive more money from male donors than their female counterparts because these men are more likely to have male-dominated business and social networks. Previous work presumes a gender affinity effect based on the fact that women candidates, particularly Democrats, receive more money from women's groups. However, no one has tested the gender affinity effect by looking directly at the candidate-donor relationship.

Hypothesis 1: Candidates' donor networks will demonstrate a gender affinity effect in which female candidates will receive more money from female donors and male candidates will receive more money from male donors.

In contrast with average voters, the party activists that form the donor bases of the Republican and Democratic parties are strongly motivated by ideology, seeking out candidates who hold similar policy views (Barber 2016a; Francia et al. 2003). Indeed, Bawn et al. (2012) describe today's parties as loose coalitions of interest groups and activists with disparate policy goals who form long coalitions to elect politicians that support their policy positions. The coalitions that constitute the contemporary Republican and Democratic parties differ in their views about the importance of electing women to office. Women and women's groups are an integral part of today's Democratic coalition. Liberal female political activists prioritize women's rights initiatives such as equal pay and reproductive rights, and they have formed organizations to recruit and promote the election of women. EMILY's List, a prominent party-allied group, asks its male and female supporters to donate to Democratic women who support reproductive rights (Burrell 2010, 2014).

In addition, members of the broader Democratic coalition value diversity as a core principle of the party. Freeman (1986) describes Democrats as having a pluralistic party culture in which constituent groups expect the party to be responsive to group interests (see also Grossmann and Hopkins 2015). Indeed, reforms adopted in the 1970s mandate the representation of women, minorities, and youth in party convention delegations so the concerns of these groups can be heard (Burrell 2010, 2014; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Wolbrecht 2000). Because the party as a whole and women's groups and female activists in particular are responsive to calls to expand women's representation, we expect that liberal Democratic women candidates will gain the most support from liberal donors, particularly female donors.

Hypothesis 2: Liberals and female Democratic candidates will get the strongest support from Democratic donors, especially female party donors.

By contrast, the Republican coalition rejects identity-based appeals for the expansion of women in office. Freeman (1986) characterizes Republican Party culture as hierarchical and suspicious of group-oriented advocacy. In contrast with Democrats, the party encourages diversity at its conventions but does not reserve seats for female and minority representation (Dolan, Deckman, and Swers 2016). Grossmann and Hopkins (2015) also suggest that the Republican Party values doctrinal purity and conservative principles over group-oriented interests. In fact, they found that more than 90 percent of Democratic activists felt their party promotes the interests of women, whereas less than half of Republican activists agreed that the Republican Party better serves the interests of women.

Thus, Republican rejection of group-based appeals is so strong that they will not legitimize group-specific claims even when they constitute symbolic partisan cheerleading (Grossmann and Hopkins 2015). Even conservative women's organizations such as the Independent Women's Forum characterize themselves as women committed to free-market principles who provide a contrast to the feminist movement, and they do not seek benefits for women within the party (Schreiber 2008). The emergence of the Tea Party only increased contestation in GOP primaries over ideological purity, reinforcing the need to demonstrate one's conservative credentials to attract donors (Boatright 2013; Karpowitz et al. 2011).

Although some Republican activists and party leaders have launched efforts to fund female candidates, these organizations have not had the level of success of EMILY's List, likely because conservative donors do not embrace the imperative to elect women (Burrell 2010, 2014; Carney 2014). Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman (2015) find that very few Republican Party donors had even heard of the organizations seeking to elect Republican women while the vast majority of Democratic donors were familiar with women's PACs, including EMILY's List, NOW, and Planned Parenthood. In fact, 42 percent of donors to Democratic House and Senate congressional campaign committees reported also donating to EMILY's List while only 7 percent of donors to the Republican congressional campaign committees had donated to the most successful Republican women's PAC, Susan B. Anthony List (Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman 2015). Thus, Republican Party doctrine does not prioritize electing women and in contrast with Democrats, Republican donors are not familiar with the groups that seek to expand representation of Republican women.

Hypothesis 3: The preference for more conservative candidates and rejection of diversity-based appeals among Republican donors will reduce the impact of gender affinity effects among male and female Republican donors.

Measuring Candidate Donor Networks

We analyze gender and partisan differences in the fundraising networks of candidates by examining itemized donations of more than \$200 made to male and female Republican and Democratic U.S. House candidates from male and/or female donors in the 2010 and 2012 elections.¹ Our dataset improves on past work by examining all candidates who competed in a primary and/or general election rather than limiting the analysis to general election candidates. Our sample includes 1,409 primary and/

or general election candidates in the 2010 midterm wave and 1,275 candidates in the more status quo 2012 presidential cycle. Given the small number of women who run for office, by including candidates who lost their primary, we capture more female candidates than studies that focus on general election candidates. Across the two cycles, there are 188 Republican women and 284 Democratic women.

We use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to test the hypotheses outlined above. The dependent variable is the log of the amount of itemized contributions of more than \$200 raised from male and female donors in the 2010 and 2012 elections. When candidates receive individual donations of \$200 or more, they must report information about the donors to the FEC. Because of the skewed nature of contributions, we used the natural log of each contribution type as our dependent variable. We use robust standard errors clustered by congressional district. The analysis pools all candidates who competed in a primary or general election in 2010 or 2012 and filed a report with the FEC.

We obtained information on the amount of money a candidate raised from male and female donors from the Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections created by Adam Bonica (2013).² The database provides the aggregate amount that a candidate received from male and female donors across the election cycle. Because we only know the aggregate amount a candidate received across the election cycle, we cannot examine donations received in the primary and general election cycle separately. Therefore, we analyze candidates who ran in the general election, which are the traditional candidates examined in campaign finance analyses. We also move beyond these analyses and examine candidates who lost their primary and the full universe of candidates who competed in the primary and general election.

Table 1 provides an overview of the amount of money that male and female Republicans and Democrats running as incumbents, challengers, and open seat candidates received from male and female donors. Corroborating previous research (e.g., Bryner and Weber 2013; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001), men donate far more to congressional campaigns than women do. These patterns hold across all candidate types. Looking at incumbents, the candidates with the largest advantages, male donors, give more than twice as much money to incumbent Democrats and three times as much money to incumbent Republicans as female donors. Clearly, the universe of individuals who donate to campaigns is highly skewed along gender lines.

Keeping in mind that male donors dominate the fundraising networks of all candidates, there are important differences in the giving patterns of male and female donors that are reflected in the networks of male and

female candidates. In the full sample of primary and/or general election candidates, women as a group raise significantly more money from female donors than men as a group, and within the category of women candidates, Democratic women receive a greater boost than their female Republican counterparts ($p < .01$). Female donors also give more to Democratic women as a group than to Democratic men ($p < .01$; these figures are bolded in Table 1). Republican women actually receive less money overall from female donors than Republican men, but this is largely because so few Republican women are running as incumbents. Thus, Republican women are particularly disadvantaged because a disproportionate number of them are challengers who raise little money and are unlikely to win.³

When we limit the sample to include only general election candidates, women candidates continue to raise more money from female donors than male candidates ($p < .01$). Across these various groups of candidates, female Democrats again garner more money from female donors than Republican women and Democratic men ($p < .10$ and $p < .01$, respectively; these figures are also bolded in the table). Conversely, male donors give more money to male candidates than female candidates, but many of these within-party relationships do not reach conventional levels of significance. Because men dominate the fundraising system, gendered patterns of giving may be detrimental to female candidates.

In the analyses below, we seek to determine if gender plays a role in a candidate's ability to attract donations from the male and female donor bases of their respective parties. Our main independent variable of interest is candidate sex. We run separate models for Republican and Democratic candidates under the expectation that the parties have distinct cultures and donor bases and that gender issues are key points of cleavage between the parties. As candidate ideology is a strong motivator for donors, we draw on Bonica's (2014) Campaign Finance scores (CFscores).⁴ The scores are calculated based on the mix of donations candidates receive from PACs and individuals. Importantly, these data allow us to analyze the ideology of all candidates, including those who lost their races. CFscores are similar to Poole and Rosenthal's (2007) DW-NOMINATE scores for congressional incumbents, with positive values indicating more conservative candidates while negative values denote more liberal candidates.

Additional independent variables account for factors that influence fundraising success. Because incumbents have such a large fundraising advantage, we include a variable for incumbency. Among incumbents, a member's position in the institution can also yield important advantages. Therefore, we include variables for party leaders, committee chairs, ranking members, and members with seats on prestige committees including Appropriations,

Table 1. Average Amount Raised from Male and Female Donors, by Candidate Gender, Party, and Seat Type (2010 and 2012).

	Number	Male donors	Female donors
All Candidates			
Democrat, Challenger, Male	405	156,501	62,876
Democrat, Challenger, Female	130	149,633	99,476
Democrat, Open, Male	151	281,583	111,669
Democrat, Open, Female	54	274,117	173,230
Democrat, Incumbent, Male	300	560,222	187,275
Democrat, Incumbent, Female	100	496,549	284,097
Republican, Challenger, Male	750	159,952	53,888
Republican, Challenger, Female	108	131,014	51,681
Republican, Open, Male	278	243,326	79,729
Republican, Open, Female	44	193,977	90,434
Republican, Incumbent, Male	328	765,958	212,397
Republican, Incumbent, Female	36	600,295	221,147
Democratic Men, All	856	320,057	115,081
Democratic Women, All	284	295,456	178,507
Republican Men, All	1,356	323,631	97,527
Republican Women, All	188	235,612	93,202
Men, All	2,212	322,248	104,320
Women, All	472	271,620	144,530
General Election Candidates			
Democrat, Challenger, Male	216	248,424	100,479
Democrat, Challenger, Female	75	203,521	138,280
Democrat, Open, Male	62	504,902	205,923
Democrat, Open, Female	24	467,129	297,158
Democrat, Incumbent, Male	293	561,189	187,671
Democrat, Incumbent, Female	98	503,205	288,468
Republican, Challenger, Male	286	337,074	112,441
Republican, Challenger, Female	43	274,167	108,554
Republican, Open, Male	79	584,644	193,188
Republican, Open, Female	8	614,506	281,199
Republican, Incumbent, Male	322	770,657	213,225
Republican, Incumbent, Female	34	612,303	226,615
Democratic Men, All	571	436,764	156,670
Democratic Women, All	197	384,717	232,349
Republican Men, All	687	568,765	168,964
Republican Women, All	85	441,453	172,027
Men, All	1,258	483,658	158,775
Women, All	282	401,716	214,020

Ways and Means, and Rules.⁵ We also account for open seat candidates as these races are generally more competitive and attract more donations. Challengers are the excluded category.

To capture the competitiveness of races, we include a measure for districts that were rated as toss-up or leaning to one party by the Cook Political Report.⁶ We measure primary competitiveness by including variables for candidates who ran unopposed and candidates who faced one opponent in the primary. Candidates who ran against two or more opponents are the excluded category. The district vote for Obama in 2008 for 2010 candidates and 2012 for 2012 candidates indicates district partisanship and provides a

measure of how safe the district is for the candidate's party. As quality candidates should raise more itemized donations, we identify challenger and open seat candidates who held previous elective office and, thus, have experience running a campaign, such as state legislators, mayors, or city council members.⁷ A variable indicating whether a candidate is running against a quality opponent accounts for the fact that the quality of the opposition will impact how much money a candidate needs to raise. We also include a variable for whether the candidate ran in the previous election to account for candidates who ran previous campaigns and established donor networks as well as frequent candidates who are less viable than other competitors.

Because the donors who give the most to campaigns are geographically concentrated in a small number of cities and states (Gimpel, Lee, and Kaminski 2006) and because scholars have found that women are more likely to be elected from specific districts that are more wealthy, racially diverse, and urban, we include additional measures of district characteristics (Palmer and Simon 2012; Pearson and McGhee 2013). These district-level measures from the census include median household income, the proportion of the population that is white, and the proportion of residents in urban areas. Scholarship on women candidates also emphasizes the importance of EMILY's List as a leading force in the effort to recruit and fund Democratic women (Burrell 2010, 2014; Crespin and Dietz 2010). We include a dichotomous variable for candidates who received donations from EMILY's List to account for the important role of this group in Democratic politics and to ensure that gendered patterns in the donor networks of male and female Democratic candidates are not simply an EMILY's List effect.⁸ We include a dummy variable for the 2012 election to account for the different electoral contexts in a presidential and midterm year. Finally, candidates who raise more money will earn more donations from male and female donors, so we include a variable for money raised from opposite sex donors as well. These variables account for the fact that candidates who raise more individual contributions overall will get more money from a particular category of donors.

Results

Table 2 presents the models for all candidates who competed in the primary and/or general election. Table 3 focuses on primary losers, a category of candidates who are largely ignored in campaign finance analyses. In Table 4, the analysis is restricted to general election candidates, the traditional group examined in previous research on women candidates. For each model, columns 1 and 2 show the results for female and male donors who contribute to Republican candidates, and columns 3 and 4 describe the giving patterns of female and male donors who contribute to Democratic candidates. Candidate gender clearly impacts the composition of a candidate's donor networks, at least among Democratic candidates. Across the full set of primary and general election candidates in Table 2, primary losers in Table 3, and general election candidates in Table 4, Democratic female candidates raise significantly more money from female donors than male Democrats.⁹ Conversely, male Democratic candidates collect significantly more donations from male donors than similarly situated female Democrats. Although we are not able to identify the specific mechanism here, these strong gender affinity effects may be due to the differing social and business connections among

male and female Democratic candidates. Because the dependent variable is measured in logged values, the coefficient on female candidate gives the percent change in the outcome. The estimated difference in donations from female donors between male and female Democratic candidates is 0.43, which translates into a 54 percent increase in money raised from female donors.¹⁰ By comparison, the difference in donations from male donors between male and female Democratic candidates is -0.38 , which is a 32 percent decrease in money raised from male donors.¹¹

By contrast, male and female Republicans who throw their hats in the ring have substantially similar individual donor networks. Across models, there are no statistically significant differences in donors' support for male and female Republican candidates. This suggests that Republican women who emerge as candidates must be able to raise money from the same donors as male Republican candidates. This finding is in line with research on the political parties that characterizes Democrats as group-oriented while Republicans focus more narrowly on ideology (Freeman 1986; Grossmann and Hopkins 2015). Further supporting the idea that gender is not a factor in the contribution decisions of Republican donors, Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman (2015) show that almost 60 percent of Democratic donors to party committees reported that gender issues were very important to their candidate support decisions while only 9 percent of Republican party donors prioritized gender issues. Dolan (2008) finds similar partisan and gender patterns in her analysis of voter affect. She demonstrates that female Democratic voters have higher levels of affect for female candidates, while male Democratic voters favor male candidates. However, there is no significant difference in the affect women and men have for Republican candidates (Dolan 2008). Thus, at both the level of voters and donors, candidate gender is a more significant factor for Democrats than Republicans.

Beyond candidate gender, male and female party donors demonstrate distinctive giving patterns, indicating that candidates with specific characteristics are more likely to earn the support of these donor groups. Recent research on donors emphasizes the importance of ideological agreement as a primary factor motivating donors to give money to candidates (Barber 2016a; Francia et al. 2003). Furthermore, candidates who receive a higher proportion of their donations from individual donors are more ideologically extreme than candidates who receive more donations from parties and PACs (Barber 2016b; Bonica 2014; Ensley 2009; Johnson 2010; La Raja and Schaffner 2015). Across models, we see that ideology is a consistent predictor of giving for male and female partisan donors.¹² As expected, Democratic female donors favor more liberal candidates. Thus, while Democratic

Table 2. Amount Raised from Female and Male Donors for Primary and General Election Candidates, by Party (2010 and 2012).

	Republican candidates		Democratic candidates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Female donors	Male donors	Female donors	Male donors
Female	0.09 (0.13)	-0.11 (0.09)	0.43** (0.11)	-0.38** (0.10)
Ideological Conservatism	0.36** (0.13)	-0.51** (0.11)	-0.21 [†] (0.13)	0.28** (0.10)
Incumbent	0.32 [†] (0.16)	0.93** (0.10)	0.14 (0.13)	0.80** (0.11)
Open Seat	0.30** (0.11)	0.06 (0.10)	-0.03 (0.11)	0.25** (0.09)
Competitive District	0.24** (0.08)	0.33** (0.06)	-0.22 [†] (0.13)	0.43** (0.10)
Unopposed in Primary	-0.07 (0.11)	0.26** (0.07)	0.17 (0.11)	0.09 (0.09)
One Primary Competitor	0.09 (0.11)	0.05 (0.09)	-0.11 (0.14)	0.13 (0.11)
Ran in 2008 (2010)	-0.05 (0.22)	-0.00 (0.18)	-0.05 (0.23)	0.02 (0.18)
Quality Candidate	0.13 (0.11)	0.49** (0.07)	0.29** (0.08)	0.28** (0.09)
Quality Opponent	-0.06 (0.07)	0.05 (0.06)	0.17* (0.08)	-0.01 (0.06)
Committee Chair	0.02 (0.08)	0.17* (0.08)	-0.05 (0.09)	0.14* (0.07)
Committee Ranking Member	-0.06 (0.10)	-0.05 (0.10)	-0.13 (0.11)	-0.05 (0.09)
Party Leader	-0.04 (0.10)	0.57** (0.20)	0.15 (0.10)	0.08 (0.10)
Prestige Committee	0.02 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	0.02 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.04)
EMILY's List	—	—	0.18 (0.12)	0.32** (0.11)
Amount Raised from Opposite Sex Donors	0.99** (0.06)	0.58** (0.03)	0.98** (0.04)	0.69** (0.03)
Constant	-1.55 [†] (0.84)	5.26** (0.44)	-1.78** (0.56)	3.38** (0.40)
Observations	1,460	1,460	1,085	1,085
R ²	.71	.76	.80	.83

The dependent variable is measured as logged contributions. Additional controls included in the model: Median Income, Urban, White, Obama Vote, and 2012 Dummy. Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses.

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3. Amount Raised from Female and Male Donors for Primary Candidates, Only Primary Losers (2010 and 2012).

	Republican candidates		Democratic candidates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Female donors	Male donors	Female donors	Male donors
Female	-0.03 (0.20)	-0.06 (0.14)	0.51* (0.26)	-0.42 [†] (0.23)
Ideological Conservatism	0.29* (0.14)	-0.49** (0.11)	-0.14 (0.16)	0.26* (0.12)
Incumbent	0.89** (0.29)	1.37** (0.21)	0.50 (0.33)	1.15** (0.29)
Open Seat	0.42** (0.15)	0.05 (0.13)	-0.08 (0.20)	0.31* (0.15)
Competitive District	0.33** (0.12)	0.24** (0.09)	-0.29 (0.29)	0.35 [†] (0.21)
One Primary Competitor	0.14 (0.23)	-0.09 (0.19)	-0.13 (0.31)	0.25 (0.23)
Ran in 2008 (2010)	0.17 (0.31)	-0.25 (0.28)	-0.23 (0.56)	0.12 (0.41)
Quality Candidate	0.24 (0.17)	0.35** (0.10)	0.28 [†] (0.15)	0.47** (0.16)
Quality Opponent	-0.05 (0.14)	0.28** (0.10)	0.51* (0.24)	0.12 (0.17)
Prestige Committee	—	—	-0.18 (0.42)	0.13 (0.25)
EMILY's List	—	—	0.57 [†] (0.33)	0.26 (0.30)
Amount Raised from Opposite Sex Donors	0.89** (0.08)	0.50** (0.03)	0.95** (0.08)	0.58** (0.05)
Constant	-0.13 (1.23)	5.57** (0.67)	-1.56 (1.27)	3.31** (0.91)
Observations	693	693	322	322
R ²	.53	.59	.67	.69

The dependent variable is measured as logged contributions. Additional controls included in the model: Median Income, Urban, White, Obama Vote, and 2012 Dummy. Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses.

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 4. Amount Raised from Female and Male Donors for General Election Candidates, by Party (2010 and 2012).

	Republican candidates		Democratic candidates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Female donors	Male donors	Female donors	Male donors
Female	0.13 (0.13)	-0.03 (0.07)	0.30** (0.11)	-0.28** (0.09)
Ideological Conservatism	0.57** (0.16)	-0.51** (0.11)	-0.43* (0.17)	0.48** (0.16)
Incumbent	-0.12 (0.12)	0.48** (0.09)	0.11 (0.14)	0.36** (0.12)
Open Seat	0.06 (0.14)	0.17 [†] (0.09)	0.04 (0.09)	0.18* (0.08)
Competitive District	-0.09 (0.08)	0.57* (0.07)	0.01 (0.10)	0.37** (0.08)
Unopposed in Primary	-0.07 (0.11)	-0.00 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.00 (0.09)
One Primary Competitor	0.06 (0.12)	-0.06 (0.08)	-0.08 (0.11)	0.02 (0.10)
Ran in 2008 (2010)	-0.43 (0.27)	0.23 (0.15)	-0.10 (0.20)	0.02 (0.17)
Quality Candidate	-0.02 (0.07)	0.20** (0.07)	0.24* (0.09)	0.07 (0.09)
Quality Opponent	-0.02 (0.05)	0.08* (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
Committee Chair	-0.05 (0.09)	0.18 [†] (0.10)	-0.02 (0.08)	0.09 (0.06)
Committee Ranking Member	0.03 (0.12)	-0.07 (0.12)	-0.08 (0.10)	-0.02 (0.09)
Party Leader	-0.29* (0.15)	0.56** (0.18)	0.15 [†] (0.08)	0.02 (0.09)
Prestige Committee	-0.01 (0.05)	0.04 (0.06)	0.04 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.04)
EMILY's List	—	—	0.12 (0.11)	0.12 (0.10)
Amount Raised from Opposite Sex Donors	1.22** (0.06)	0.52** (0.04)	0.94** (0.06)	0.80** (0.05)
Constant	-4.89** (0.98)	7.19** (0.56)	-1.70** (0.55)	3.06** (0.44)
Observations	737	737	748	748
R ²	.78	.84	.86	.88

The dependent variable is measured as logged contributions. Additional controls included in the model: Median Income, Urban, White, Obama Vote, and 2012 Dummy. Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses.

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

female donors prefer female candidates, they also give more to liberal candidates. With feminist activists and women's groups a key element of the Democratic coalition, female Democratic donors likely support candidates who favor policies that promote egalitarian gender roles.

Republican female donors also support more ideologically extreme candidates, as conservative candidates raise more donations from Republican women. For Democrats, a one-unit increase in conservatism results in a 19 percent decrease in contributions from female donors, whereas for Republicans, a similar change in conservatism results in a 43 percent increase in contributions from female donors. The preference of female Republican donors for more conservative candidates and their indifference to candidate gender may reflect the fact that individuals who take more conservative positions generally reject explicit calls for electing more women and minorities to office and often subscribe to more traditional views about gender roles (Freeman 1986; Schreiber 2008). Given that both female Democratic and Republican donors prefer more extreme candidates, and because female donors constitute a much smaller proportion of campaign donors than men, it is possible that the women who do contribute are more ideologically committed partisans.

To gain a better understanding of the magnitude of these gender effects, we calculated predicted values for the amount of money male and female Democratic candidates received from male and female donors. Figures 1 and 2 display the values for incumbent and nonincumbent candidates receiving donations from their party's male and female donors. They also include the placement of moderate candidates such as Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), conservatives such as former Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) and Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), liberals such as minority leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Sander Levin (D-MI), along with ideological outliers such as Keith Ellison (D-MN), co-chair of the Progressive Caucus and an early endorser of Bernie Sanders (Brodey 2015), and Tim Huelskamp (R-KS), a Tea Party favorite and member of the ultra-conservative Freedom Caucus who endorsed Ted Cruz (R-TX; Wingerter 2016). The solid lines represent donations to male candidates, and the dashed lines indicate donations to female candidates. As discussed above, the lower graphs in Figure 1 demonstrate that female Democratic donors give significantly more to incumbent and nonincumbent female candidates. The lower graphs in Figure 2 show that male Democrats contribute significantly more to incumbent and nonincumbent male candidates. The

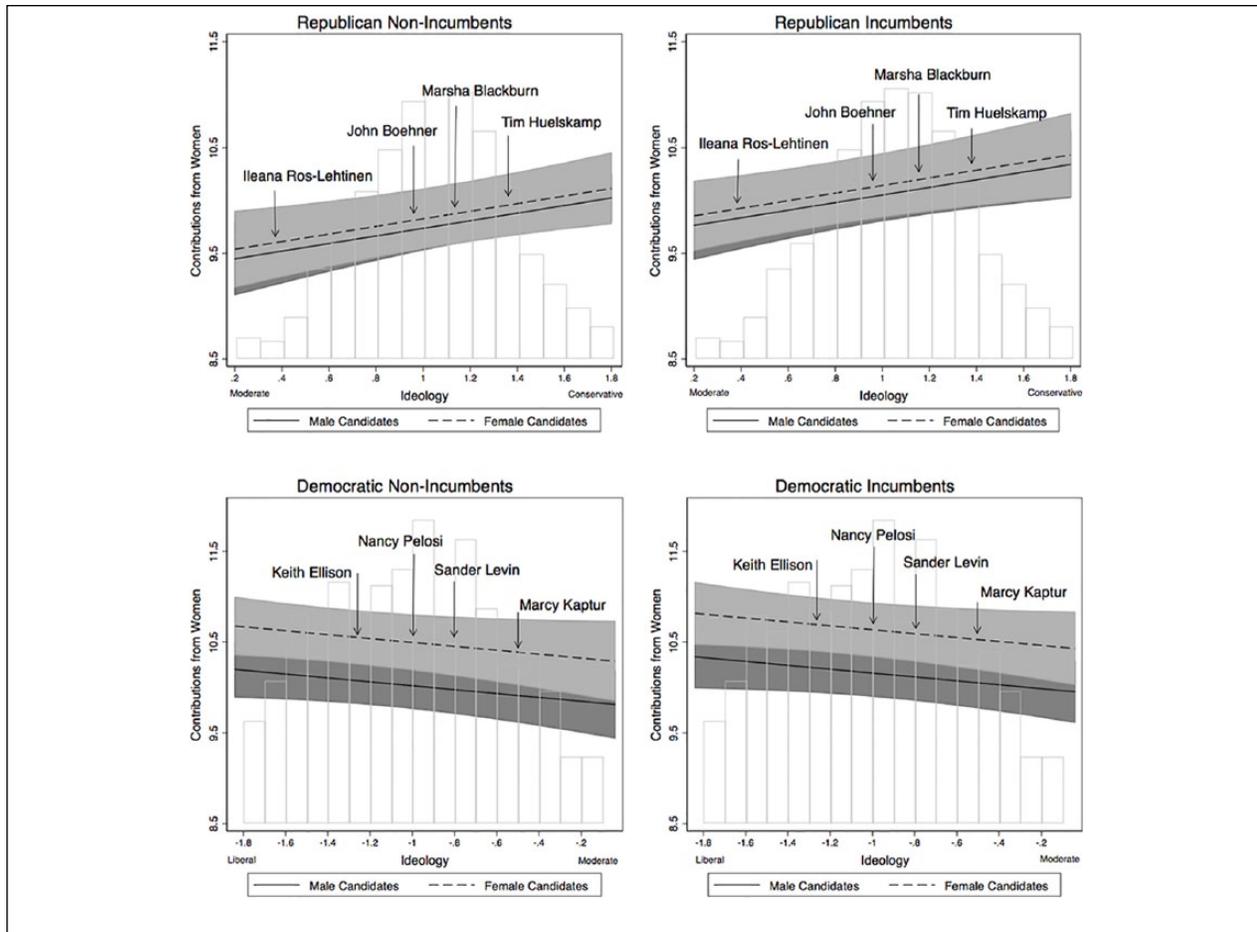


Figure 1. Contributions from female donors, by candidate gender, ideology, and seat type. Predicted values are calculated from the models in Table 2. The dependent variable is measured as logged contributions.

overlapping confidence intervals for male and female Republican candidates in the upper graphs illustrate that Republican donors do not prioritize the sex of the candidate.

We can see, too, that male Democratic and Republican donors are less likely to support strongly ideological candidates. A one-unit increase in conservatism leads to a 32 percent increase in donations from male Democratic donors and a 40 percent decrease in donations from male Republican donors.¹³ This may appear surprising as men constitute the vast majority of donors and research suggests that candidates who receive a larger proportion of their donations from individual donors are more extreme (Barber 2016b; Boatright 2013; Ensley 2009; Johnson 2010; La Raja and Schaffner 2015). However, the pool of candidates soliciting donations in these cycles is overwhelmingly comprised of liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans. The gray bars indicate the ideological distribution of candidates and show where the bulk of the contributions are being directed. Thus, while male donors

may be slightly more inclined to support less extreme candidates, the majority of candidates receiving money from men look more like John Boehner and Nancy Pelosi than Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Marcy Kaptur.

Finally, research on individual donors suggests that purposive donors who want to influence policy will donate to competitive and open seat races in an effort to expand the number of seats controlled by the party (Barber 2016a; Boatright 2013; Francia et al. 2003; Francia et al. 2005; Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz 2008). Access-oriented donors seek to give to party leaders and individuals holding committee leadership positions or seats on influential committees (Barber 2016a; Francia et al. 2003). It is clear that male and female partisan donors exhibit unique strategic considerations in their giving patterns. Female Democratic donors appear to value the election of women to office over other traditional predictors of campaign giving. Incumbents and open seat candidates did not receive more money from Democratic women donors. Instead, the focus of Democratic female donors on women

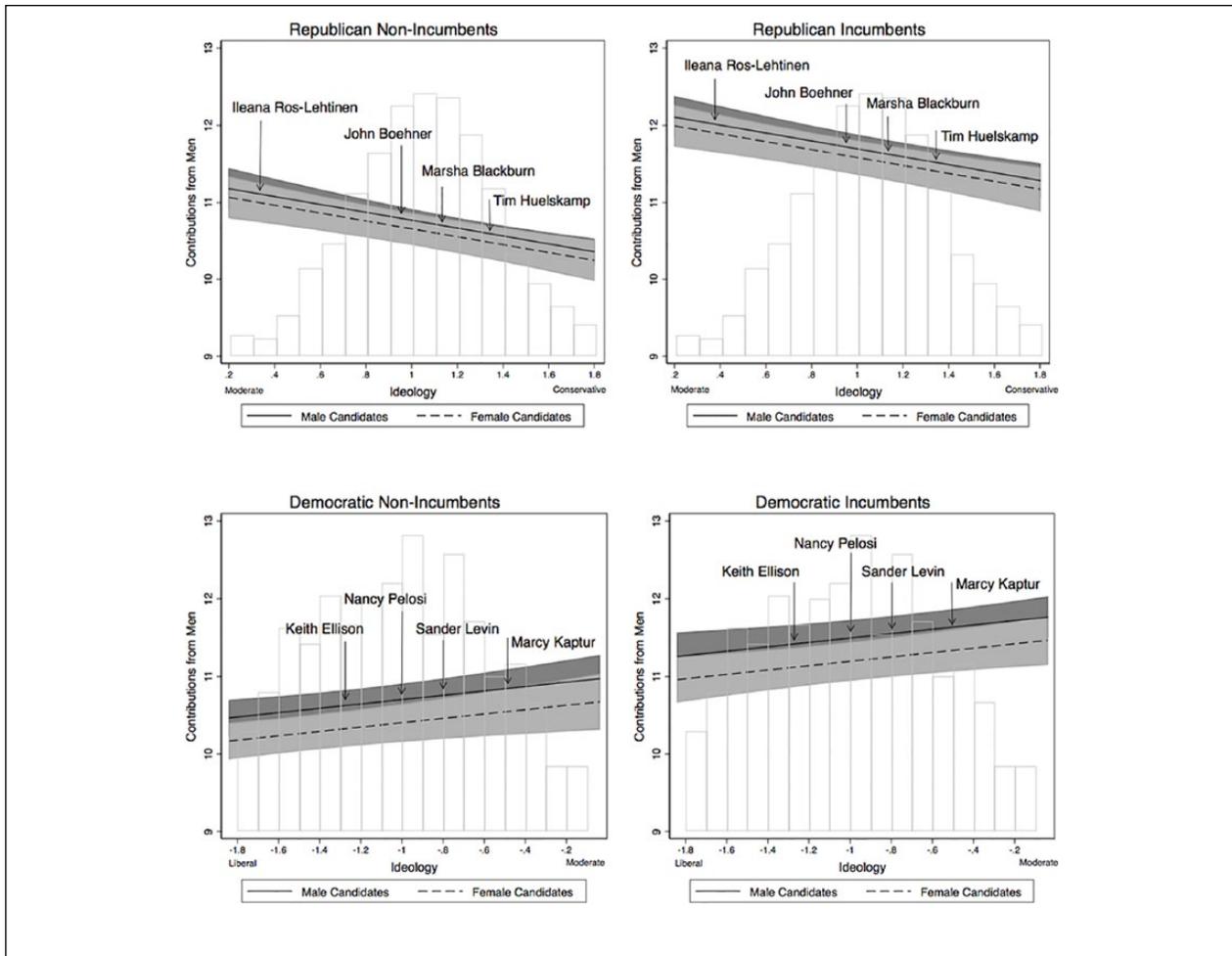


Figure 2. Contributions from male donors, by candidate gender, ideology, and seat type. Predicted values are calculated from the models in Table 2. The dependent variable is measured as logged contributions.

candidates, liberals, quality candidates, and candidates who face a quality opponent is consistent with the idea that they prioritize backing female Democrats in primaries for safe seats so that a woman will emerge as the nominee and be elevated to Congress. The null results for incumbents, committee chairs, and members of prestige committees suggest that Democratic female donors also do not follow an access strategy. In the general election model, female Democratic donors were marginally more inclined to donate to party leaders. This may reflect the fact that two of the Democratic leaders are women, minority leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Democratic National Committee (DNC) chair Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL), and both are prominent and prolific fundraisers.

By contrast, the giving patterns of Democratic men reflect more traditional partisan strategies. Quality candidates, candidates in competitive races, and candidates running for open seats receive more money from male donors, reflecting a desire to expand the seats controlled

by their party. Similarly, the fact that men are more likely to donate to women who have received support from EMILY’s List shows they are giving to women identified by an allied party group as strong candidates to win their race.¹⁴ Male donors also demonstrate access-oriented strategies, giving to committee chairs in the primary and incumbents in both the primary and general election.¹⁵

Among Republicans, female donors emphasize electing more conservative candidates. There is also some evidence that they seek to help Republicans increase their seat share. Candidates in competitive districts and open seats raise more money from female donors in the models in Tables 2 and 3; however, they do not give more money to these candidates when we look only at general election candidates. Furthermore, Republican female donors appear to reject access-oriented strategies among general election candidates. Incumbents and committee leaders do not receive more money from female donors, and party leaders actually receive less money from Republican

women. This may reflect their preference for conservative candidates over mainstream party leaders. Finally, Republican men adopt both party expansion and access-oriented strategies. Republican candidates in competitive districts and open seats, quality candidates, and those facing quality opponents receive more from male donors, indicating a commitment to enhancing Republicans' hold on Congress. They also engage in access-oriented giving, as they contribute more to incumbents, committee chairs, and party leaders.

Conclusion

Existing research suggests that women candidates do not suffer from a fundraising disadvantage because those who run raise as much money as their male counterparts in similar races. Thus, male and female challengers, open seat competitors, and incumbents appear to be on equal footing. We suggest that while women who run may raise as much money as men, the current campaign finance system favors the emergence of particular types of candidates: liberal female Democrats who demonstrate a commitment to women's issues and conservative Republicans.

In our candidate-centered system, aspiring office-seekers must rely on their personal résumés and attributes to build a fundraising network that will demonstrate their viability to party leaders and activists and convince them to engage their networks on a candidate's behalf. Our research demonstrates that the composition of the individual donor pool is gendered, and these donors prefer candidates who share their ideological views. On the Democratic side, women running as challengers, incumbents, and in open seats receive more donations from women and fewer donations from men than male candidates in similar races. Given these gender affinity effects among Democrats, female Democratic candidates will be helped by the efforts of EMILY's List, Kirsten Gillibrand's Off the Sidelines, and other donor networks to convince more women and men to support women's candidacies. Examining which candidates women donors give to indicates that liberal Democratic women will attract these donors, while male Democratic donors prefer less strongly ideological candidates. Female Democratic candidates are further helped by the fact that female donors appear to prioritize the election of women over efforts to expand the party's seat share through investment in competitive races or access-oriented strategies that channel donations to incumbents, committee chairs, and party leaders.

On the Republican side, female Republican candidates compete for the same set of donors as male Republican candidates. Neither Republican male nor female donors appear to prioritize the election of female candidates. Female donors' preference for conservative candidates means that conservative Republican women will attract the support of today's Republican donors. Indeed, state legislators in the

pipeline to congressional office recognize that conservative Republicans have a clearer path to Congress, and moderate state legislators are less likely to run for higher office (Thomsen 2014, 2015). Moreover, surveys indicate that female Republican state legislators are more likely to be moderate than their male counterparts (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2014). Yet, our research indicates that only the conservative Republican women will find a viable fundraising path among the current pool of Republican donors.

These trends in candidate fundraising also have implications for policy making. Democratic women supported by female donors who value descriptive representation and hold liberal policy views can be expected to champion policies to advance women's rights. Indeed, it is often Democratic women who are at the forefront of congressional battles related to issues such as reproductive rights and equal pay (Swers 2013). However, the Republican women who gain election to Congress will be unlikely allies for these policies as only conservative women can raise the funds to mount a credible campaign. While women's issues are not central to the agenda of the Republican Party, those members who advocate them will champion more conservative proposals. Thus, it is likely that women's issues will be a continued source of polarization between the parties rather than an area for bipartisan compromise.

Finally, our research indicates that while women are a small proportion of donors, the women who contribute are more committed to their ideological goals than to expanding party seats or gaining access to incumbents and party leaders. Future research should examine the occupational backgrounds, geographic locations, and political views of these donors to see how they differ from the much more prevalent male contributors. Will efforts to expand the ranks of female donors exacerbate our polarized politics or will such efforts mobilize a more ideologically diverse population of women?

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Notes

- To identify candidates, we examine the reports candidates filed with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) for the 2010 and 2012 elections and the FEC list of "Official Election Results for the U.S. House of Representatives." For example, the 2010 list of candidates can be found at <http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2010/federalections2010.shtml>. We exclude twenty-one candidates who ran unopposed in both the primary and the general election, as these candidates do not face the same fundraising imperatives that most candidates confront. Similarly, in the models on general election candidates, we exclude candidates who are unopposed. We do not exclude candidates who ran unopposed in the primary because these candidates may be raising funds with an eye to a competitive general election. We also exclude 710 candidates who received no funds from either male or female donors, as we are unable to examine the gender composition of their donor networks. Finally, we exclude Michele Bachmann (R-MN) from the analysis. Gearing up for a 2012 presidential campaign, Bachmann far outraised her male and female counterparts across the partisan spectrum that year, raising \$22 million compared with \$1.6 million for the average incumbent.
- We thank Adam Bonica for generously providing us with data on contributions by male and female donors and for assisting with follow-up questions. The Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections (DIME) can be accessed at: <http://data.stanford.edu/dime/>. When coding for gender, there are two concerns: how to deal with gender ambiguous names and how to handle joint spousal contributions. The gender coding of names is based on an automated coding scheme that incorporates information on gender ratios of first names as reported by the Census and gender-specific titles such as Mr., Mrs., Jr., and Sr. If a donor with a gender ambiguous name at some point used a gender-specific title, all donations made by that individual were coded accordingly, despite the ambiguous name. Using this coding scheme, very few donations are not gender coded. In 2010, for example, 98.3 percent of individual contributions are coded as male or female. With regard to spousal donations, the DIME data indicate a joint contribution anytime an "&" symbol appears for an individual contribution. If an individual made a joint donation and also made other donations on her own, then that individual was given credit for the joint donation. In cases where both spouses also made contributions on their own or the only donations made by the couple are joint donations, the donation is not included in the gender donor codes. In general, though, joint contributions constitute a very small proportion of individual donations. For instance, of the 13.4 million donor observations in 2010, only 0.6 percent included an "&" symbol and are considered joint contributions.
- The figures in Table 1 are average amounts raised from male and female donors for these various groups of candidates. Individual candidate numbers can be very different, so it is important to note that these are aggregate numbers for each of these various groups.
- Of the 2,684 candidates in our full sample, 139 do not have Campaign Finance scores (CFscores). These individuals are included in the averages in Table 1 but excluded from the analyses in Tables 2 to 4.
- The party leaders include Speaker of the House, majority/minority leader, majority/minority whip, Democratic Caucus Chair and Vice-Chair, Republican Conference Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary, Democratic and Republican Campaign Committee Chair, Republican Policy Committee Chair, Democratic Steering Committee Co-Chairs, Democratic Senior Chief Deputy Whip, and Republican Chief Deputy Whip. For the 2012 elections, we also include the Assistant to the Democratic Leader, James Clyburn (SC), and Democratic National Committee chair, Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (FL).
- In the general election, the competitive district variable represents the candidates rated as competing in a toss-up race or a race that leans to one party. For the models that include both primary and general election candidates, we use the variable to identify candidates who are competing in districts that will have a competitive general election contest.
- We thank Gary Jacobson for providing candidate quality data for 2010 and 2012 general election candidates. We thank Stephen Pettigrew for providing candidate quality data for 2010 primary candidates. The authors collected 2012 candidate quality data for primary election candidates from America Votes and various Internet sources.
- The EMILY's List variable is a dichotomous variable that identifies all candidates who received either a direct or bundled contribution from EMILY's List as reported by Open Secrets. For example, see <https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/pacgot.php?cmte=C00193433&cycle=2012> for the 2012 recipients.
- We focus on the results in Table 2 throughout this section, as one key contribution of the paper is that we use the full sample of primary and general election candidates. The findings and conclusions are largely the same when the sample is restricted to primary losers or general election candidates.
- Like Barber, Butler, and Preece (2016), we use the following formula for interpreting coefficients with logged dependent variables: a one-unit increase in X leads to an $(\exp(b) - 1) \times 100$ percent change in Y. We also present predicted values below with respect to candidate ideology.
- The advantage that Democratic women receive from female donors seems to make up for their losses among male donors. As shown in Table 1, Democratic women candidates receive more money, on average, than Democratic men (see also Crespin and Dietz 2010, Dabelko and Herrnson 1997, and Kitchens and Swers 2016).
- We use Bonica's Campaign Finance scores (CFscores) to measure ideology, as they allow us to examine the ideology of primary and general election candidates rather than just incumbents. The scores are also highly correlated with

- DW-NOMINATE scores (Bonica 2014), which are the most widely used measure of legislator ideology. To bolster the validity of our findings regarding the impact of candidate ideology, we ran separate models on incumbents using DW-NOMINATE scores and on nonincumbent candidates who served in state legislatures and have a Shor and McCarty (2011) NP score. These results are provided in Tables A1 and A2 (see supplemental material on the PRQ website). They are largely consistent with our findings that extreme candidates receive more from women, and mainstream candidates receive more from men. In contrast with our main models, these models suggest that like Democrats, incumbent Republican women and quality female candidates receive more money from female donors and less money from male donors. This may be true for Republican women who have a high profile and are frequently used by the party to reach out to female voters and activists (Swers 2013). However, the sample of candidates in these models is very small and not representative of the full candidate pool.
13. Again, these values are calculated from the models in Table 2 using the formula provided above.
 14. In Tables 3 and 4, the EMILY's List variable is a positive but insignificant predictor of contributions from male donors, and in Table 3, it is now a marginally significant predictor of contributions from female donors. This may indicate that female donors will support the more marginal candidates who garner EMILY's List donations. We also ran the models in Table 2 without the EMILY's List variable, and the results remain the same (see Table A3 in the supplemental material).
 15. We also controlled for southern states, and we ran the models with district fixed effects. The results are provided in Tables A4 and A5 (see supplemental material), respectively.

Supplemental Material

Replication data for this article is available with the manuscript on the PRQ website

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