

FIGHTING FOR REPRESENTATION:
EFFECTS OF CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS ON FUNDRAISING

by

KATIE BETH CHASE

(Under the direction of Susan B. Haire)

ABSTRACT

I examine what factors determine the level of financial support from political elites that congressional candidates receive in primary elections, with a particular focus on the role of gender. I hypothesize that female candidates will receive a greater amount of funds from Political Action Committees as opposed to male candidates, who receive more funds from other types of political elites, such as the party. My data includes candidates from primary races for the House of Representatives from the years 2000-2010. I provide separate analyses of contributions by party committees, candidate campaign committees, and political action committees.

INDEX WORDS: Campaign Contributions, Fundraising, Gender Politics, Primary Elections, House of Representatives

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Chapter 1

Introduction

A long journey began in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848: the first petition for women's suffrage was signed. It took 72 years, many prominent activists, and many smaller victories—primarily in the Western territories—before the 19th Amendment was passed in 1920.

Despite not having the right to vote in an election, Jeannette Rankin of Montana was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1916 as the first woman to serve in Congress. By 2010, a total of 260 women have served in both houses of Congress. In the 112th Congress, there are a total of 89 female members: 17 are Senators, while 72 serve in the House of Representatives. Delaware, Iowa, Mississippi, and Vermont have never sent a woman to either chamber of Congress (National Women's Political Caucus).

By contrast, women now represent over half of the registered voters in the United States, and yet they are drastically underrepresented at all levels and branches of the government, both federal and state. So what accounts for this underrepresentation? Scholars are divided on the issue, though many attribute it to generalized stereotypes that voters have formulated regarding women. The overall consensus in the literature responds that women do not run for office (Bernstein 1986; Dabelko and Herrnson 1997; Herrnson and Stokes 2003; Lawless and Pearson 2008; Lawless and Fox 2010), quality

female candidates are rare (Welch 2008), and culturally, women are perceived as too weak for elected office (Hedlund and Stein 1979; Conway and Ahern 1997; McGlen and Gunther-Canada 2005).

The research on this subject has a sharp focus on the general election, with only limited reference to primaries. Clearly, we must consider whether women run at all, or do they simply not win in Congressional primaries? Without examining this initial step in the election process, we are jumping to the end without considering the means. In other words, we must consider what happens in the primary elections in order to better understand the general election. Many different explanations may be offered in order to understand why women are underrepresented in Congress, and some of these may stem from treatment of female candidates in the primaries.

Research on candidate selection focuses on partisan cues and gender cues separately, which does not allow for consideration of how these factors interact (Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009). How the electorate views and treats women in the electoral process is an unsettled question. Largely due to the assumption that women are more liberal, the literature finds that women in the Democratic party are advantaged while women in the Republican party are disadvantaged (Thomas 1994; McDermott 1998; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009). However, a review of state executive elections shows that women are more likely to emerge in strong Republican states (Fox and Oxley 2003). Most recently, the 2010 election results for women mirrored the national swing for Republicans (Center for American Women and Politics).

Scholars believe that female candidates now attract equal number of voters, raise equal sums of money, and win at the same levels as similarly situated men (Burrell 1994; Seltzer and Leighton 1997; Dolan 1998). Women who emerge are generally strong, quality candidates, which tends to help them when matched against male candidates without previous electoral experience. However, if the male and female candidates are

matched equally, there is evidence that men get the votes and a latent gender bias among voters emerges (Lawless and Pearson 2008). Many scholars find that gender stereotyping and negative treatment of women remains salient in the electoral environment, among both voters and political elites (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Flammang 1997; Fox 1997; Niven 1998; Sanbonmatsu 2002). What causes this discrepancy? Does the latent gender bias shown among voters carry over into the political elites that have such a large role in determining the fate of candidates for office?

The political system itself is a barrier for women, particularly when acquiring access to funding and leadership positions within the party organization (Conway and Ahern 1997; McGlen and Gunther-Canada 2005). Primary elections in particular can hurt the opportunities of female candidates to gain national elective office, because male party leaders sometimes oppose their nomination in situations other than those considered hopeless for the party (Burrell 1992). Party leaders may be unwilling to allow female candidates to run, particularly in more competitive races, because men are viewed as more viable candidates, able to compete more effectively against quality challengers, and able to raise more funds from political elites and individuals (Carroll 1994). Furthermore, male incumbents in Congress may wish to preserve the "boys club" atmosphere of Congress and discourage party leaders from supporting female candidates. Opposition from the party, voters, and other political cities may come in many forms, but one notable way is through fundraising. As money is essential to running an effective campaign, a candidate who is unable to raise the necessary funds to be competitive will not be successful.

The purpose of this thesis is to enhance the literature on women in politics. My goal is to explore and analyze just one of the reasons why women are so drastically underrepresented in Congress—the issue of fundraising, particularly from political elites, focusing particularly on the candidates' party and political action committees (PACs). After a review of the relevant literature both on women in politics and fundraising, I will develop

some theoretical expectations and hypotheses about female candidate fundraising. After reporting descriptive statistics derived from my dataset, I will empirically test my hypotheses. The thesis ends with a final consideration of the implications of the findings, limitations of the study, possibilities for future research, and concluding remarks.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Women and Politics

Women are less prominent in national politics for many reasons: a lack of quality female candidates to run is just one of many. The political system and societal norms in America place various barriers on females, including family and work-related responsibilities, which can prevent many otherwise qualified women from pursuing political careers. Another reason may be attributed to gender-related voter bias against female candidates. Voters tend to view females as much more liberal than men (Koch 2000; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009), or believe that women are not as capable as men on tough issues, specifically the economy or foreign and military affairs (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Lawless 2004).

Cultural norms have long dictated that a strong leader is someone who attempts to exert his or her will over a situation (Conway and Ahern 1997). The strong leadership qualities viewed as necessary to get ahead in American politics are seen as the ideal for men, while this is not necessarily the case for women (Hedlund and Stein 1979; Conway and Ahern 1997). Women are generally viewed by society as nurturing and soft, which hinders their advancement in certain contexts.

Furthermore, career choice and preparation for a political career can provide a barrier for women. Traditional female occupations such as teaching or nursing are less compatible with politics than more male-dominated professions like business and law, and they do not offer the visibility or financial reward that makes a political career possible (Conway and Ahern 1997; McGlen and Gunther-Canada 2005). Often, women also have family demands that prevent them from holding office until later in life (Bernstein 1986). Women with young children in particular are perceived as less suited to public office due to the customary demands of raising a family (Conway and Ahern 1997; McGlen and Gunther-Canada 2005).

Stereotypes also play an essential role in how women are perceived by the electorate. The trait approach to voting exists when the electorate makes assumptions about the candidate's gender-linked personality traits, and these assumptions drive expectations that women and men have different areas of issue expertise (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993). Voters tend to see women as competent on social issues and soft on military and crime, and vice versa for men. Because women are viewed as more competent on social issues, a political climate dominated by foreign policy, military concerns, and a pervasive atmosphere of war may work against female candidates (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Lawless 2004). Furthermore, studies have shown that voters perceive women as more able to handle issues such as children and family problems, consumer protection, welfare, health, education, and the environment, while men are seen as better able to deal with the economy, law and order, and balancing the budget (Reingold 2000).

This gender-based approach to voting reflects the idea of identity politics as well as descriptive representations—female voters support female candidates because of feelings of group solidarity, particularly if they are mindful of the underrepresentation of women in elected office (Plutzer and Zipp 1996; Herrnson and Stokes 2003; Dodson 2006; Dolan 2008). Furthermore, women as a constituency group are more significant and more im-

portant to female candidates (and later representatives) than to their male counterparts; in other words, female officials are more likely to accept the link between descriptive and substantive representation of women (Reingold 2000).

This is particularly true in low information elections, when voters will often use gender stereotypes about women as being more ideologically liberal and more competent on social welfare and ethics issues, in making their electoral decisions (McDermott 1998). Legislative research on females shows that they bring different perspectives to the legislature regardless of party, though approaches differ between the parties as well. Republicans, who traditionally have less support from women, design their policy proposals in an attempt to expand their appeal, while Democrats try to design policy and tailor their public appeals to maintain their advantage among women (Swers 2002).

The political system itself is another hurdle for women, particularly when acquiring access to funding and leadership positions within the party organization (Conway and Ahern 1997; McGlen and Gunther-Canada 2005). Recruitment to public office is a highly selective process which may possibly weed out the women who do not fit the typical (male) profile of an elected official (Reingold 2000). Women who conform to feminine gender norms, fulfill traditional nurturing roles, or who promote feminist agendas, may be discouraged from running for office altogether. Therefore, the few women who do enter the male-dominated world of politics are not so very different from the men who are already there (Carroll 1994; Reingold 2000).

Primary elections in particular can hurt the opportunities of female candidates to gain national elective office, because male party leaders sometimes oppose their nomination in situations other than those considered hopeless for the party (Burrell 1992). Party leaders may be unwilling to support female candidates, particularly in more competitive races, because men are viewed as more viable candidates and able to compete more effectively against quality challengers (Carroll 1994). With various barriers to female candidates

and stereotypes to combat, what factors help women overcome these obstacles, and in which party do they find electoral success?

The growing gender gap in partisanship is well documented. The recent rise in cultural issues including reproductive rights, female equality, and legal protection for homosexuals are increasingly important determinants of party identification (Kaufmann 2002). This leads to an increase in women identifying more often with the Democratic Party, which is seen as the party who is more favorable to female rights. If women are leaning more Democratic and vote more often for other women, it seems women will be more successful running in the Democratic Party. Recent electoral trends, however, have shown an increase in Republican women—perhaps beginning with the appeal of Sarah Palin in the 2008 presidential election. This has affected the base voters—as more women run and win as Republicans, more women begin to vote for Republicans. However, this could simply be a mirror of the national swing toward Republicans that occurred in 2010.

The social and political contexts in which a woman runs for office can affect the number of votes she receives. Wealthier districts, more urban districts, districts outside the South, those with higher proportions of African-Americans, and those more supportive of Democratic presidential candidates are more likely to have had female candidates (Burrell 1992). Because certain types of districts are more likely to support female candidates, and many of those districts tend to elect Democratic members of Congress, it follows that if women are elected, they will also be Democratic and therefore more liberal (Welch 1985).

In addition to political context and gender stereotyping, the makeup of the electorate could also affect female candidates. Who voters identify with has a significant impact on who they eventually vote for, regardless of other factors that may influence voting. Research shows that women are more likely to vote for other women (Sanbonmatsu 2003; Balienson and Collins 2008; Branton 2009; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009); gender also predicts support for the idea of having more women in office, with women being more

supportive of this than men, particularly when women understand the exact degree of their representation in office (Sanbonmatsu 2003).

Identity politics has an underlying tension with partisan politics. If identity voting is more helpful to Democrats than those running as Republicans, then identity politics could merely be the preface to a gender-based shift in the alignment of the American party system. For example, if Republican women defect from their party to vote for a woman running on the Democratic ticket, gender would represent a potentially significant cross-cutting cleavage running within the Republican party. Furthermore, if women and men are not equally likely to cast votes on the basis of gender identity, this could become the basis of an emerging key factor in close elections (Plutzer and Zipp 1996; Norris 2003). Current statistics and election results indicate that women typically vote in much larger numbers for Democrats than their male counterparts; in some recent elections, this has been as much as an 11-percentage-point difference (Center for American Women and Politics).

Conventional wisdom dictates that the sex of the candidate seems to play an identifiable, though perhaps not a determinative, role in general elections. Results in quantitative studies have been mixed, with many scholars suggesting that there is no real difference between male and female candidates, and the small difference that does exist favors the female candidates (Hurwitz and Lanier 2003; Fredrick and Streb 2008). Perhaps women comprise so few of those running that only the strongest candidates emerge.

Despite this research, since the 65th Congress, the number of women serving as legislators has increased significantly. During the first few congresses, the amount of Republican and Democrat women stayed close to even, but the numbers began to diverge around the 90th Congress, with the number of Democratic women increasing significantly faster than Republican women. This is exhibited in Figure 1, which shows not only the total num-

ber of women serving in Congress from the 65th to the 111th Congresses, but also the numbers of female Democrats and Republicans (Center for American Women in Politics).

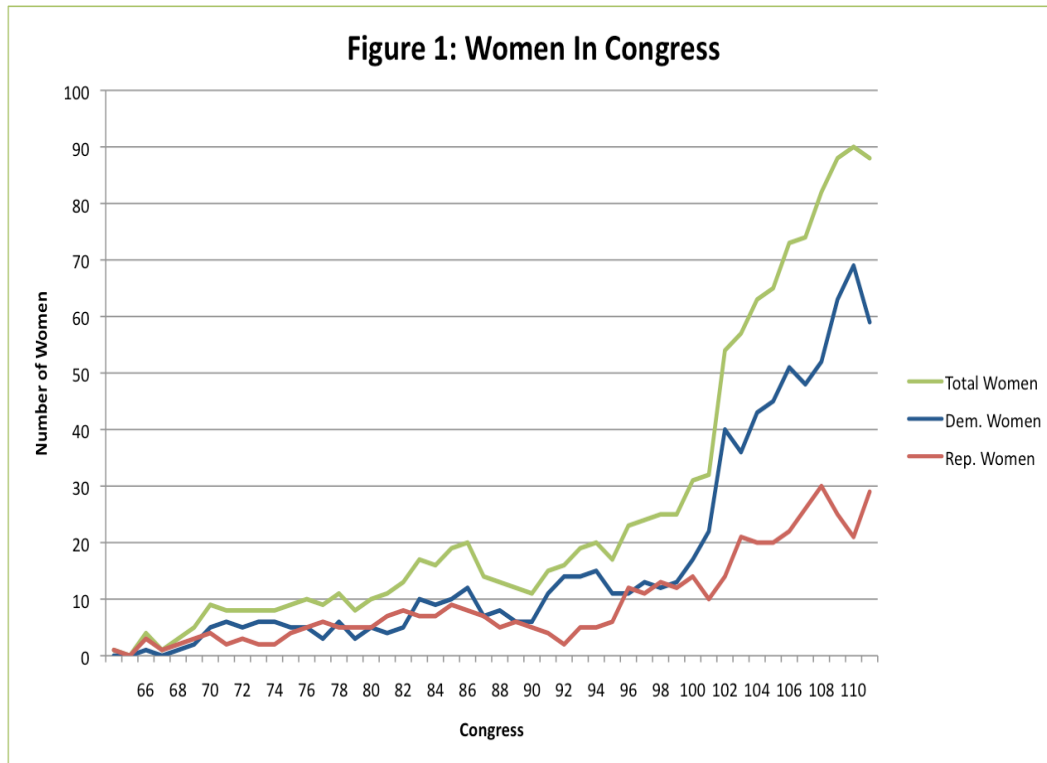


Figure 2.1: Women in Congress

Figure 1 raises several interesting questions. Are the traditional, conventional assumptions about women in power fading? Since 1992, women have made incredible gains in politics, not only in Congress, but also as serious Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates.¹ If women can make these sorts of steady gains in politics, does that mean that voter stereotypes of female candidates are changing? Recent trends indicate that there may be a shift in the electorate leading to an evening-out of Democrat and Republican women in the house.

Despite the increasing numbers of females in Congress, there is still a lack of women running for federal office. There could be many reasons for this, as I detailed in the

¹Then-Senator Hillary Clinton made a bid for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 2008; Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska appeared on the Republican ticket in 2008 as a Vice-Presidential candidate.

preceding paragraphs, but for the remainder of this thesis my focus will be on candidate fundraising as one explanation for the underrepresentation of females in Congress.

2.2 Fundraising and Female Candidates

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the consensus among researchers was that female candidates were at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts with regards to fundraising (Meisol 1978; Buchanan 1978; Baxter and Lansing 1980; Mandell 1981; Ehrenhalt 1982; Rosenberg 1982; Roberts 1983). However, since 1980, conventional wisdom has dictated that candidate gender has no independent effect on campaign fundraising, though female candidates appear to be disadvantaged with respect to party contributions (Uhlener and Schlozman 1986; Burrell 1994). Many of the studies that devote space to campaign fundraising are anecdotal, with many insights coming from elite interviews (Witt and Mathews 1994; Handlin 1998; Sanbonmatsu 2002) and personal experiences (Mandell 1981; Woods 2000; Taymor 2000; Kunin 2008) rather than from statistical analysis.

Women have some psychological disadvantages when it comes to fundraising. Mandell (1981) found that women are more likely than men to hold fundraisers such as cocktail parties and pig roasts. Women are also not a part of the same political and financial circles as men, which can be a hindrance when it comes to fundraising. Once women are elected and gain incumbent status, fundraising becomes easier because that status allows them entry into the predominately male financial networks that fund political campaigns (Mandell 1981; Witt and Mathews 1994). The increasing costs of campaigning also disproportionately hinders women; they are less psychologically disposed to ask for money for themselves (though they are great fundraisers for charities), and many women are uncomfortable or hesitant to commit family money towards the gamble of running for office (Witt and Mathews 1994; Schenken 1995).

A study by Uhlaner and Schlozman (1986) found that, in a descriptive comparison, female candidates, particularly Democrats, appeared to be disadvantaged with respect to party contributions. Specifically, they found that “female Republican challengers and one open-seat candidate collected a larger share of their funds from their party than did their male Republican counterparts; otherwise the parties seem to have been more generous to their male candidates” (Uhlaner and Schlozman 1986, 46). These particular findings, although not statistically significant, were cause enough for Uhlaner and Schlozman to entertain the possibility that party leaders systematically discourage women from becoming candidates (1986).

Of the few quantitative studies on female campaign fundraising, they are usually limited in time frame or scope, focusing on just one U.S. House of Representatives race in one year (Uhlaner and Schlozman 1986; Althens 2006). This calls into question their generalizability and begs the question as to whether there actually are gender discrepancies in campaign fundraising across the board.

1992, also dubbed the “year of the woman,” was ushered in thanks to women’s political action committees (PACs) like EMILY’s List (Early Money is Like Yeast).² These women’s financial networks were energized by the Clarence Thomas nomination hearing, in which Anita Hill accused then Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment in front of a committee that lacked a female representative (Cook and Wilcox 1994). From that point on, PACs became a substantial force in female candidate fundraising (Uhlaner and Schlozman 1986; Cook and Wilcox 1994; Crespín and Deitz 2010; Handlin 1998; Woods 2000; Dolan and Swers 2007). Women’s mobilization through these groups turned the table on male candidates, who had previously received

²A complete listing of women’s PACs and Donor Networks, including both national and state-based, as well as the type of candidates they support, may be found at the Center for American Women and Politics’ website

a greater proportion of their funds from these political action committees (Uhlener and Schlozman 1986).³

Although women have historically reported difficulties in getting the party to back them with financial support, more recent evidence suggests that parties are gender neutral when it comes to allocating campaign dollars (Biersack and Herrnson 1994; Burrell 1992, 1994, 1998; Fox 1997). Once women have received their party nomination, the parties are as likely to back their candidacies as they would similarly situated male candidates. Research has indicated that the parties behave strategically in deciding how to allocate campaign dollars, hoping to secure the greatest potential return on their investments (Dolan and Swers 2007). From 1980 to 1990, political party committees gave more to their female candidates than males, indicating that the Democratic and Republican party organizations are not sources of financial discrimination against women party nominees (Burrell 2003, 2005, 2006). Furthermore, the disadvantage in fundraising that seems to disproportionately affect female candidates may be due to their status as challengers.

Despite the fact that many studies point to a parity between male and female candidates when it comes to fundraising, many female candidates continue to feel disadvantaged (Handlin 1998). There remains a prevalent perception among female candidates that women have a harder time fundraising than men, whether it is true or not. In a survey of state legislative candidates in nine states, Jenkins (2007) found that female candidates devote a greater proportion of their time to fundraising than male candidates, and that they appeal to a broader base of donors for support in order to raise the same funds as men. It can be argued that, even if female candidates' perceptions of discrimination in fundraising are unfounded, it has implications regardless because it is influencing how female candidates behave. For instance, this may account for why women do not run for office as often as men (Jenkins 2007).

³It should be noted that many of these women's PACs support primarily Democratic candidates, as many of these PACs focus on supporting only pro-choice candidates. Therefore, Republican women who are pro-life do not receive as much financial backing as their Democratic competitors.

This leads me to question whether gender impacts the level of financial support received by congressional candidates. To answer this question, I will examine the amount of elite financial support provided to candidates in congressional elections. Unlike many previous studies, I will analyze multiple years worth of primary elections. I will also go beyond the simple comparison of campaign receipt totals, by examining contributions of political elites; i.e., candidate committees, parties, and political action committees (PACs).

2.3 Political Elites

Before attempting to explain female candidate fundraising, I will provide a short review of the literature regarding political elites. This thesis focuses on political elites in order to provide a broader comparison of differences in fundraising for female and male candidates; previously, most studies have only focused on individual donations and PACs.

My definition of political elites includes not only parties, but also political action committees and candidate committees. It is important to provide an understanding of each of these types of political elites in order to understand why they are important with regards to fundraising efforts by candidates for the House of Representatives.

With regards to the party elites, I define it not only as the party as a whole, but also as the various committees set up by the party to support the candidates. Many times, these committees are set up and led by party elites, which Carlson (1990) defines as those who are generally more involved in politics than the mass public. Furthermore, these party elites are more likely to be concerned with the electability of candidates. If this holds true, then these types of party elites will be most likely to donate to the candidate that is most likely to win the election, regardless of gender (Carlson 1990).

In recent elections, political action committees have received increasing attention, both from the media and from scholars. These organizations receive financial contribu-

tions from private donors or business, and use that money to campaign for or against political candidates, ballot initiatives, or legislation (Eismeier 1985). In the context of this thesis, I will be examining donations to candidates from all types of PACs, as described below.

There are several types of PACs, including connected, non-connected, leadership, and super PACs. Connected PACs are those established by businesses, labor unions, trade groups, or health organizations. They receive and raise money from a “restricted class” consisting of managers, shareholders, and members of unions or interest groups. As of January 2009, there were 2,865 registered connected PACs, all related to corporations, labor unions, and trade organizations (Ingram 2009). Groups with an ideological mission, single-issue groups, and members of Congress and other political leaders may form “non-connected PACs.” These organizations may accept funds from an individual, business PAC, or organization. As of January 2009, there were 1,594 non-connected PACs, the fastest-growing category (Ingram 2009).

Another type of PACs are leadership PACs. Since elected officials and political parties cannot give more than the federal limit directly to candidates, they sometimes set up a leadership PAC to make independent expenditures, which is not limited under Federal Election Commission rules (Federal Election Commission). Under the FEC rules, leadership PACs are considered non-connected PACs, and can accept donations from individuals and other PACs. Since current office holders have an easier time attracting contributions, these types of PACs are a way dominant parties can capture seats from other parties. However, if a leadership PAC is sponsored by an elected official, he cannot use funds to support his own campaign, though the PAC may fund travel, administrative expenses, consultants, polling, and other non-campaign expenses (Tarr and O’Connor 2003).

The 2010 election marked the rise of a new type of political action committee, the “super PAC.” They are officially known as “independent-expenditure only committees.” If they are operated correctly, they can raise unlimited sums from individuals, corporations, unions and other groups. Super PACs were made possible by two separate judicial decisions: *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2009) and *Speechnow.org v. FEC* (2010).⁴ Although super PACs are not allowed to coordinate directly with candidates or political parties because they are independent, many super PACs openly support particular candidacies, typically by financing negative ads.⁵

Since many PACs focus only on single issues, they will only financially support the candidates that hold the same political views or support the issues that are important to those PACs. EMILY’s List and other female-centric PACs have made it their mission to support only female candidates, and many of these support only pro-choice female candidates. As I will discuss later in the theory section, these characteristics make it possible that female candidates will receive more money from PACs than their male counterparts.

Finally, I turn to a short discussion of candidate committees. These are designated by a single candidate to promote his or her nomination or election to a particular public office and may only be utilized to support one candidate (Federal Election Commission). Typically, for incumbents, these candidate committees become standing committees that exist between elections, enabling the incumbent to amass a war chest. It is much more difficult for the same levels of fundraising to be met by a challenger (Krasno, Green, and Cowden 1994).

⁴The Supreme Court held in *Citizens United* that the government may not prohibit unions and corporations from making independent expenditures for political purposes. In *Speechnow.org*, the Federal Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit held that contributions to groups that only make independent expenditures could not be limited.

⁵Though this study does include 2010, it is hard to make any sort of generalized statements regarding the effect of super PACs on female candidate fundraising as there has been very little research done in this area.

Very little quantitative analysis has been done on the effects of campaign committee spending in House elections. Krasno, Green, and Cowden (1994) found that challengers struggle to match the fundraising levels of incumbents, and since they have no fundraising reserve from the campaign committee war chest, it is nearly impossible to match incumbent spending.

A recent study by Kanthak and Krause (2010) suggests that personal relationships between candidates affect the probability of receiving a donation as well as the size of that donation. This effect is heightened when the candidates are from the same state or same region, or if the candidate is a current member of Congress serving in a leadership position. Furthermore, Kanthak and Krause found support for the idea that men will discriminate among colleagues based on gender and preference divergence when deciding whether or not to contribute to their colleagues, but this has little effect on the size of the contribution after they make that decision.

Despite the lack of research in this area, I felt it was important to include candidate campaign committees as they are an integral part of campaign spending. Furthermore, federal election laws require that all spending from candidate committees be filed to the Federal Election Commission as part of regular reports of financial activity, including both receipts and expenditures. All three types of political elites—the party, political action committees, and candidate campaign committees—will be examined to see how their financial support differs between male and female candidates, and what factors affect their support.

Chapter 3

Framework

Low levels of female representation in the U.S. House of Representatives is far from a new problem. However, the literature as it relates to primary fundraising has only recently begun to consider women specifically. We know women run for elected office less often than men, but we gain a great deal of knowledge in understanding the circumstances in which women do choose to run in primaries and when they succeed. It is my contention that fundraising is an important part of the success of female candidates.

Why is it important to understand this? As discussed previously, women are severely underrepresented in Congress. If fundraising has the effect on female candidate success that I believe it does, then we are one step closer to understanding one of the reasons why women are underrepresented. I will focus my theory and analysis on the primary elections in an attempt to understand some of the important differences between the primary and general elections.

3.1 Why Primaries?

I focus on primary races for several reasons. The primaries provide more variation in candidate characteristics, as more candidates are able to compete for their party's nomi-

nation. Furthermore, when candidates of the same party compete against one another in the primaries, it allows for more variation in support, particularly from the party. Once a candidate reaches the general election, he is only competing against the candidate from the opposing party. Since he would be the only candidate in the race, the party would be more likely to support him financially. This is not true of the primaries, when multiple candidates of the same party are competing for the same goal of reaching the general election. Therefore, I would expect to see much more variation in fundraising between candidates of all parties in the primary elections. This variation will naturally emphasize certain candidate characteristics that are important to the various types of political elites.

By examining the primaries, which allow for a larger number of candidates from the major parties, I am also able to look at a larger sample that will include more women. Furthermore, if I were to analyze only the general election, I would voluntarily censor my data to exclude female candidates that fail to win their primary election. Since fewer women make it through the gauntlet of the primary season to run in the general election, I would be cutting my sample size drastically.

The primary elections have other characteristics that make them interesting to study, particularly when focusing on fundraising. Early money often signals to the voters that a candidate is viable; it can also help to bring in money from other potential donors (Krasno and Green 1988). Money has been shown to have a significant, albeit dynamic, effect on the outcome of the vote in elections, particularly with regards to incumbents. It seems that money would be particularly important in a primary election where a candidate is competing against more than one other challenger (Box-Steffensmeier and Lin 1996).

Furthermore, Lawless and Pearson (2008) consider data from House primary elections to answer the question of whether gender affects a candidate's vote share or level of electoral competition faced. Because primaries are low visibility affairs, with limited

turnout, voters will tend to base decisions on candidate characteristics such as gender rather than a true evaluation of the quality of a candidate.

Primaries also give a candidate an opportunity to establish a campaign structure which helps them succeed in the general election in November (Ezra 2001). Candidates get a head start on piecing together the organizational structure of their campaign, hiring staff, increasing name recognition, building legitimacy, honing in on a effective campaign message, and solidifying their party's electoral base.

The rest of this chapter will break down my various hypotheses and their theoretical underpinnings. It will be subdivided into sections detailing gender, incumbents, open seat races, partisanship of the candidate, quality candidates, and finally district characteristics.

3.2 Gender

Gender plays an important role in American elections, though scholars are divided on the exact effect gender has in determining vote choice. In the 20 years since 1992, this role has changed significantly, and given the success of legislators such as Hillary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi among many others, the role of gender in elections may be a declining one. Herrnson, Lay, and Stokes (2003) found that women tend to be more successful electorally when they campaign on issues that are traditionally associated with males. Other studies have found that women who run on women's issues tend to be more successful, and those that played specifically to women as a constituency group tended to perform better electorally as well (Reingold 2000).

It is my contention that gender will have an impact on the amount of elite financial support a candidate receives in a given election. Historically, women were thought to have a hard time raising funds (Meisol 1978; Buchana, 1978; Baxter and Lansing 1980; Rosenberg 1982; Ehrenhalt 1982) but as time progressed there have been many studies

that have dispelled this belief (Uhlener and Schlozman 1986; Burrell 2003, 2006; Althens 2006) and still others have returned mixed results (Burrell 1994; Wilhite and Thielemann 1986; Gaddie and Bullock 1995). Although some studies have found there to be no difference with regards to gender, many of these studies analyzed total campaign receipts (Uhlener and Schlozman 1986; Burrell 1994; Althens 2006). I believe by breaking down funds raised into different categories—i.e., separating those funds into several different types of support coming from political elites—I will find much more variation in campaign receipts.

Due to the fact that I am specifically looking at “elite support” and subdividing this into contributions from PACs, candidate campaign committees, and party committees, I may find variation where others did not. In looking at these various divisions, I contend that male candidates will receive more money from the party committees than their female counterparts, as historically, males have tended to receive more support from the party (Reingold 2000).

Hypothesis 1a: Male candidates, regardless of challenger or incumbent status, will receive more money from party committees than females.

On the other hand, due to the explosion in female-centric PACs and donor networks such as EMILY’s List, WISH List, the Susan B. Anthony List, and many others, that have been formed specifically to support female candidates, I hypothesize that female candidates will receive more money overall from PACs than male candidates.

Hypothesis 1b: Female candidates, regardless of challenger or incumbent status, will receive more money from PACs than males.

Finally, I hypothesize that male candidates will receive more money from candidate committees than their female counterparts. Because candidate campaign committees are funded by the candidates themselves, I believe the funding will go primarily to male candidates as a function of the relationships that are built over time in Congress. Furthermore,

there is a strong sense of camaraderie and a “boys club” atmosphere that Congressmen may not want to threaten with the addition of women.

Hypothesis 1c: Male candidates, regardless of challenger or incumbent status, will receive more money from candidate committees than females.

3.3 Incumbents

We know that incumbents possess innate electoral advantages over other candidates (Jacobson 1978). This is because incumbents have better name recognition and may have advantageous networking opportunities by currently being in elective office (Krasno, Green, and Cowden 1994; Theilemann and Dixon 1994; Thomas, Cassie, and Jewell 1994; So-rauf 1998). Furthermore, incumbents also tend to be more seasoned politicians who have established a personal relationship with their constituents (Fenno 1978).

Incumbents also have a large fundraising advantage—challengers have a difficult time in eclipsing the fundraising abilities of incumbents and often cannot come close in spending (Abramowitz 1991). Current members of Congress not only maintain a skeletal campaign organization between elections, but many also have a sizable financial war chest; both are characteristics that deter opposition (Box-Steffensmeier 1996; Herrnson 2008). Incumbency is one of the biggest predictive factors of whether a challenger chooses to pursue a House seat; it also acts as a deterrent for strong candidates (Banks and Kiewiet 1989; Jacobson 2009). It is for these reasons that we expect that incumbents will receive more elite financial support than their challengers.

Hypothesis 2a: Female incumbents are more likely to receive more financial support from elites than female non-incumbents.

Furthermore, I believe that when a female incumbent is running in primary elections, incumbency will be to her advantage in that she will receive more funds than a comparable

male incumbent. If a woman has previously served in Congress, she will be more attractive to the party and therefore receive more money. Combined with the total received from PACs, her fundraising totals will come out far ahead of a male incumbent's funds.

Hypothesis 2b: Female incumbents are more likely to receive more financial support from elites than male incumbents.

3.4 Open Seat

This hypothesis attempts to understand the competitiveness of a race. Due to the incumbency advantage previously discussed, candidates that run against an incumbent are more likely to lose. However, races without an incumbent will innately be more competitive for challengers. It has been shown that a majority of the newcomers to Congress made it there by winning open seats (Gaddie and Bullock 2000).

Furthermore, open seat races tend to attract strong, quality challengers in both the primary and general election stages, compared to races with an incumbent which are less likely to cultivate strong primary competition (Banks and Kiewiet 1989). The competitiveness of these races tends to encourage donors to support a candidate more liberally, which ensures bigger fundraising numbers. If a donor perceives the race as being competitive, he can be more easily persuaded to donate larger sums of money (Alexander 2005).

Finally, because the candidates are not running against an incumbent, women are more likely to win, and quality challengers are more likely to emerge in races with an open seat. Therefore, elites may be more likely to support a female candidate in these types of races because there is a larger opportunity for the female candidate to win. If a female emerges in open seat races, it signals to donors that she is more likely to be a quality candidate.

Hypothesis 3: Female candidates in a race with an open seat will receive more funds from all types of political elites.

3.5 Partisanship

Since women are considered more liberal than men, they are therefore more likely to emerge in Democratic primaries (Welch 1985; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b; Koch 2002; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009). Based on Figure 1, there is evidence to support this assertion, as more female Democrats have been elected to serve in Congress than female Republicans. Women emerge more often in the Democratic Party partly due to the issue stereotypes associated with females, such as education, welfare, and women's rights. Not only do women tend to focus on these compassion and social issues, but they also tend to take more liberal views on these issues (Dolan, Deckman, and Swers 2007). Though greater liberalism is found on both domestic and foreign policy issues for different reasons, it typically grows out of a concern for family issues, and the macho posturing that is typical of male legislators seems unnecessary and unappealing to women (Welch 1985; Sanbonmatsu 2002).

Nationally, the Democratic party has been the main beneficiary of the increasing rates of women's political participation at all levels, from the voting booth to national elective office. Furthermore, they have also benefitted from the increasing frequency and significance of the gender gaps in public opinion and voting behavior (Reingold 2000). Following from this, I hypothesize that Democratic elites have greater incentives to support female candidates financially because Democratic women are more likely to be perceived as strong, viable, quality candidates.

Hypothesis 4a: Democratic elites will be more likely to donate to their female candidates than Republican elites.

If Democratic elites donate more to their female candidates, then that might provide a signal to other donors that the candidate is viable and they will therefore be more likely to support that candidate financially. Furthermore, because there is a network of PACs that support only pro-choice and feminist female candidates¹, it is likely that Democratic candidates will receive more funds from PACs. Because of this, I hypothesize that Democratic female candidates will receive more funds than their Republican counterparts.

Hypothesis 4b: Democratic female candidates will receive more funds from all types of political elites than Republican female candidates.

3.6 Quality

A variable cited often in congressional literature is the quality of the candidate; those that are considered quality (or are experienced challengers) are more likely to win due to more extensive resources, experience, name recognition, and networking, among other factors (Jacobson 1980; Green and Krasno 1988; Van Dunk 1997; Bond, Convington, and Fleisher 1985; Krasno and Green 1988; Biersack, Herrnson, and Wilcox 1993; Krasno, Green, and Cowden 1994). These characteristics of candidates can often make or break a campaign—for a candidate that does not have experience, name recognition, or other factors, it can be almost impossible to fully finance a campaign from outside sources (Krasno and Green 1988).

Following from some of the literature, I define a quality challenger as a non-incumbent who has held an elective public office. This single characteristic will provide some of the requisite experience, name recognition, and networking abilities that are necessary to be a viable candidate for the U.S. House. Jacobson (1989, 2009) found that these types

¹Nationally, these are EMILY's List, Feminist Majority PAC, The Future PAC, and WISH List. There are many more that operate exclusively on the state level.

of candidates receive substantial bumps in their vote totals over non-quality candidates, and they are then more likely to win in a general election. Quality challengers are also more likely to have a pool of pre-existing campaign donors from which they can draw initial funds. I hypothesize that if a female candidate has proven herself previously in other elected office, or is an experienced challenger, I believe that she will be more likely to raise more funds for her campaign from all types of political elites.

Hypothesis 5a: Among female candidates, quality challengers are more likely to receive higher campaign contributions overall than non-quality challengers.

Furthermore, because the parties historically have a tendency to be hesitant in their support of female candidates financially, I hypothesize that if a quality female candidate presents herself, the party will then be more likely to support her financially. In turn, this will send a signal to the other types of political elites and she will raise more funds overall.

Hypothesis 5b: Among female candidates, quality challengers are more likely to receive higher campaign contributions from political elites, particularly the party, than if she were not a quality challenger.

3.7 District Partisanship

Congressional primaries literature has made it clear that more quality challengers emerge when their partisanship is consonant with the district's partisanship. In districts that are not competitive, meaning one party consistently receives a majority of the vote, that party's nominee will be all but guaranteed to win the general election. When a candidate has a greater opportunity to win an election, more quality challengers will emerge. For example, if a district consistently elects candidates from the Republican party, then stronger candidates will emerge in that party's primary, whereas the candidates from the

Democratic party will be less likely to put up a strong candidate in the face of a large possibility of a general election defeat.

As discussed earlier, certain types of districts—typically urban areas or those with a higher concentration of African-American voters—tend to be both more liberal and more supportive of Democratic candidates. Because women tend to be more liberal and often emerge from the Democratic party, it follows that they may be elected disproportionately from these liberal districts. In addition, previous success of females in the Democratic party increases their likelihood of Democratic candidacy.

Furthermore, I believe women are more likely to emerge in these Democratic-leaning districts because the voters will be more sympathetic and the vote outcome will be in their favor. If the voters tend to be more sympathetic, then it follows that donors in these districts will also be more sympathetic and more willing to support the candidate financially. Therefore, in these districts women will have a greater chance of winning their race, and political elites will be more likely to support female candidates than if they were running in other districts (such as a Republican-leaning district) where they would be considered more of an underdog candidate.

Hypothesis 6: Among female candidates, political elites will be more likely to support these candidates in districts that typically vote Democrat than if they were running in districts that typically vote Republican.

Chapter 4

Data Collection and Description

Given these hypothesized expectations, I will spend the remainder of the thesis analyzing the data from Congressional primary elections during the 2000's. I will first discuss the data collection process. Next, I will examine the basic trends in the data, and finally I will provide some basic descriptive statistics.

In order to analyze my hypotheses, I utilize data on U.S. House of Representatives primaries from 2000 to 2010. The data comprise candidates that filed to run in one of the 435 House districts, which totals to 7,721 candidates, of which 1,170 are female. The unit of analysis is individual level candidates running for congressional office.¹ Only individuals that appeared on the ballot in either the Democratic or Republican primary are included; third party, independent, and other write-in candidates are omitted from this analysis due to the inability to measure fundraising from party elites. Otherwise, the data include those who filed paperwork with their Secretary of State or State Board of Elections, as well as with the Federal Election Commission.

I have excluded from my data set individuals who raised no funds, as it is unlikely that these candidates were serious. Including these individuals works against finding evidence

¹North Dakota is the only state in which a female primary challenger never emerged.

in support of several of my hypotheses, and as they raised no funds it seems unlikely that they ever ran a campaign.

Most of the data for this analysis was drawn from the Federal Election Commission as well as ICPSR's "Campaign Expenditures in the United States" series of data;² these included all financial data that was needed for the analysis. Information for the other, non-financial variables was obtained from volumes 24 through 29 of the *America Votes* book series.³

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The data collected yielded 7,721 Democratic and Republican candidates, contesting 4,541 House primary elections between 2000 and 2010. Of these candidates, 1,170 are female, with 718 Democrats and 452 Republicans. Tables 1 and 2, shown below, present some basic numbers regarding the candidate characteristics for each year included in the data set.

Table 1 shows several clear trends in the data. The number of women running for Congressional office has steadily increased over the years, with almost 100 more women running for office in 2010 than ran in 2000. The data also show that significantly more women run as Democrats than as Republicans, which provides evidence for some of the theoretical underpinnings of my hypotheses.

The raw numbers highlight the discrepancy between male and female candidates within the time frame with a nearly 6:1 ratio between men and women. Proportionally, however, approximately the same amount of men and women ran as incumbents during this time frame. Furthermore, when examining the proportions of quality can-

²Federal Election Commission. *Campaign Expenditures in the United States: Detailed Report File*. ICPSR03590-v1. Washington, DC: Federal Election Commission. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.

³Cook, Rhodes, Alice McGillivray, and Richard Scammon. 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2011. *America Votes: Election Returns by State*. Vols. 24-29. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

didates, it shows that when females run they are more likely than males to be quality candidates. This is backed up by findings in previous literature, which show that women have traditionally only undertaken careers in politics when they are sure they are likely to win, and being a quality candidate is part of that formula. Furthermore, women are more likely to serve as elected members of local school boards or city councils before they undertake a foray into national politics, which lends them name recognition among local voters, all of which are important measures of quality.

Looking closely, the data also shows that when women run they are more likely to be successful, with 63% of females winning compared to 57% of men. In light of this, it is important to note that the number of women running for office is increasing over time, and women are also winning much more often. This last finding is interesting in light of some of the research that has been done previously. If women are more successful than men on average, then why do more women not run for office? It is clear by these numbers that voters are willing to elect women to office, so this should provide an encouragement and some incentive for women to run for office.

Given the raw data presented in Table 1, I feel it is necessary to present a breakdown of the fundraising data, in an attempt to discern whether there is a difference in fundraising between male and female candidates. Table 2 presents these results.

The data shown in Table 2 are interesting for several reasons. First, men raise more money on average than their female counterparts, which is as I expected. Funds donated to the candidate by the party also falls in line with my expectations; male candidates receive almost one hundred dollars more than female candidates on average. Though this is not as large a difference as I expected, this finding does provide some evidence to support the theory presented earlier in this thesis.

Political Action Committees, on average, donate almost \$1000 more on average to female candidates. I believe this is a function of the types of PACs and donor networks

that are likely to support female candidates over male candidates; these PACs play an important role in donating early money to start the candidacy of a woman. It is also important to note that PACs donate a sizable portion of money to candidates regardless of gender. Because of current campaign finance laws (both federal and state),⁴ the party and candidate committees are only allowed to donate so much money to the candidate.⁵ The rest of the funding may come from the candidate himself or individual donors.⁶

Finally, I take a look at the candidate committees. This shows the most interesting results of the basic descriptives—candidate committees donate over three times as much money to male candidates as female candidates, which provides some preliminary support for hypothesis 1c. This is interesting for several reasons. Because candidate committees are allowed to donate money to other candidates, in addition to supporting that candidate’s campaign, these committees may donate at the discretion of the candidate. Furthermore, these committees are typically used more often by incumbents as part of their war chest.

Given this, why is there such a huge discrepancy in the amounts donated to male and female candidates? Are male candidates not willing to use the funds from their candidate committees to fund the campaigns of females? Is this exposing a latent gender bias among the men of the House of Representatives, who want to preserve the “boy’s club” feel of Congress? Since so little work has been done regarding the effects of candidate committee fundraising on election results, this could be an area that provides some new and interesting information in future studies.

⁴Current campaign finance laws can be found on the Federal Election Committee’s website.

⁵To each candidate, the party may donate up to \$5000.

⁶To each candidate, individual donors may donate up to \$2,500, while PACs may donate up to \$5,000 each to multiple candidates, and the FEC-authorized campaign committee may give up to \$2,000 to another candidate’s campaign.

TABLE 4.1: DESCRIPTIVES OF CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS

Year	Total	Dem	Inc	Quality	Success
2000					
Male	986	457	318	453	628
Female	158	98	49	89	113
% Female	13.8%	8.6%	4.3%	7.8%	9.9%
2002					
Male	1022	456	316	488	622
Female	174	107	54	96	116
% Female	14.5%	8.9%	4.5%	8.0%	9.7%
2004					
Male	1004	468	329	477	623
Female	186	115	54	92	129
% Female	15.6%	9.7%	4.5%	7.7%	10.8%
2006					
Male	1049	553	319	490	635
Female	200	134	62	96	130
% Female	16.0%	10.7%	4.9%	7.5 %	10.2%
2008					
Male	1055	503	310	482	630
Female	201	137	64	103	125
% Female	16.0%	10.9%	5.1%	8.2%	9.9%
2010					
Male	1435	475	305	513	658
Female	251	127	70	112	133
% Female	14.9%	7.5%	4.2%	6.6%	7.9%
Totals					
Male	6551	2921	1897	2903	3796
Female	1170	718	353	588	746
% Female	15.2%	9.3%	4.6%	7.6%	9.7%

Notes: Table 1 gives the aggregate number of men and women who ran in a congressional primary during each election cycle, along with a break down of Democrats, incumbents, and quality candidates who ran during the race that year; Table 1 also presents the number of men and women who succeeded in the race that year. Table 1 also provides the percentages by gender—for example, in 2000, 13.8% of those running were female, while 8.6% were female democrats, etc.

TABLE 4.2: DESCRIPTIVES OF CANDIDATE FUNDRAISING

Mean Funds Raised	Male	Female
Total	75,389.67	72,574.70
Party	732.53	639.00
PACs	22,525.61	23,866.07
Candidate Committees	2,590.68	783.70

Notes: This table shows the mean of funds raised by the candidates, broken down by gender and type of political elite. It is presented in raw dollar amount.

Chapter 5

Modeling Elite Support

This chapter utilizes several statistical analyses to model the factors that influence campaign contributions from political elites. I am focusing mainly on the effect of gender on the campaign donations. First, I will summarize my variables, including operationalization, used in this analysis and outline the model specification. Next, I will run three different linear regressions, one for each type of political elite. These separate models will allow me to test my hypotheses regarding financial support for female candidates. In each of these models, the dependent variable is the fundraising totals in raw dollars from each of the different types of elites. In each of the models, I have also dropped the candidates that did not raise any money, as it is unlikely that they were ever serious candidates.

Furthermore, I also run separate models for both male and female candidates to see if different factors explain what contributes to fundraising for women candidates versus men candidates. I choose to do this because I believe many of the variables are conditioned by gender—meaning that the variables I have chosen to use in this study may have different effects for different genders. For example, *Incumbent* may have different effects for a male candidate versus a female candidate.

5.1 Summary of Variables

Table 3 provides a summary of each of the variables used in the analysis. The dependent variable in each of the models is the fundraising total in raw dollars from either the party, PACs, or candidate committees.

Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c suggest that gender can explain the amount of fundraising from political elites. I test these two hypotheses by including a dichotomous variable, *Gender*, which indicates whether the candidate is a male or female. If the candidate is a male, he is coded 0, while a female candidate is given a 1.

My next hypotheses (2a and 2b), attempt to explain the effect that incumbency has on financial contributions. In order to measure incumbency, I employ a dichotomous variable (*Incumbent*), coded 1 if the candidate is an incumbent, and 0 if the candidate is a challenger. Combined with the previous variable, *Gender*, this should give a good indication as to whether my hypotheses are correct.

Hypotheses 3 deals with open seat races. I operationalize this independent variable (*Open Seat*) as a measure of whether or not the previous incumbent withdrew from the race, which leaves the seat open to either party (open seat coded 1, 0 otherwise). Because the candidates are not running against an incumbent, women are more likely to win, and quality challengers are more likely to emerge in races with open seats. In regards to these two variables (*Open Seat* and *Incumbent*), the excluded reference category is the challenger candidate.

The next set of hypotheses (4a and 4b) deal with the candidate's *partisanship*. This is a simple measure of the candidate's party, coded 0 for Republican, 1 for Democrat. This measure should indicate whether the candidate's party has an effect on fundraising.

Following this, I operationalize a variable for *Quality Candidate*. This is a measure of whether or not the candidate has held previous elective office. If they have held office before, I code them as 1, and if they have not, they are assigned a 0.

My final hypothesis to be tested is regarding the candidate's district (*District Partisanship*). Since I am testing whether political elites will be more likely to support female candidates in districts that typically vote Democrat, I operationalize this variable as the presidential two-vote share in the district for the Democratic party.

There are other variables not expressly related to the hypotheses that I believe may have an effect on the outcome of the model. The first of these is *Type of Primary*, which is coded as 1 if it is an open primary, and 0 otherwise. This variable is important as it operationalizes whether the primary in a state is open (meaning that anyone can vote in any primary) or closed (meaning that only registered members of the party may vote in that party's primary). This accounts for female candidates potentially performing better in open elections, as female voters are able to vote across party lines for female candidate, which would be in line with identity politics, as explained in the literature review section.

I have also included a control variable for the *Total Candidates* in the race, which is a simple measure of the number of candidates running in that party's primary that particular year. In a crowded primary, the party may not donate as much money until one candidate emerges as the likely nominee. Finally, I have included a control for *Election Year*, which I have operationalized as a variable coded 0 for the year 2000 and 1 for year 2002, 2 for year 2004, etc.; I have chosen to code the variable this way following other similar studies (Uhlener and Schlozman 1986; Reingold 2000; Herrnson, Lay, and Stokes 2003; Burrell 2006).

5.2 Party

In order to analyze the hypotheses as they relate to fundraising from the Party, I utilized a linear regression. Table 4 presents the results of the party models, which uses fundraising total in raw dollars from the party as the dependent variable.

In both the full model and the male candidates only model, *open seat* is significant. Running in a race with an open seat results in a 184 dollar increase on average, holding all else constant, in the amount of fundraising coming from the party versus a race with an incumbent and challenger. Interestingly, this variable is not significant in the females-only model, though it is for males. Perhaps this is due to the fact that more males run on average, and given that there is more variation between the candidates, the party finds it difficult to choose a frontrunner candidate to donate money.

Interestingly, there are no significant variables in the females-only model. Perhaps there are other factors that are taken into account when the parties are deciding which females to donate to and these factors are not reflected in the model.

5.3 Political Action Committees

The second part of my analysis relates to fundraising from Political Action Committees. Just as with the models regarding the party, I utilize a linear regression in order to analyze PAC donations to candidates. Table 5 presents the results of the second full model, which uses fundraising total in raw dollars from PACs as the dependent variable.

In looking at the results presented in Table 5, the full model shows that *incumbent*, *open seat*, and *quality candidate* are significant. Being an incumbent candidate rather than a challenger results in a 592 dollar decrease in fundraising on average, holding all else constant. This is a surprising result, given that incumbent candidates have generally proven themselves to PACs, unlike non-incumbents. *Open Seat* is also a significant variable, leading to almost a 160 dollar decrease in fundraising from PACs. Given that open seats are more vulnerable, it makes sense that PACs would wait until after the primaries are over to throw their financial support behind a specific candidate.

Quality candidate is also significant: the variable results in an increase in funding for the candidate when coming from a PAC. Since quality candidates typically have a better

return on investment than non-quality candidates, it makes sense that PACs would use this as an indicator of which candidate is likely to be most successful. Finally, *district partisanship* is significant and positive. This could indicate that PACs are slightly more willing to donate money to a candidate that comes from a more liberal district.

In the males-only model, *Open seat* and *quality candidate* are also significant. Interestingly, in the females-only model, there were no significant variables. Perhaps this indicates that when donating to female candidates, there are other qualities that are taken into account when deciding where to allocate funds.

5.4 Candidate Committees

The final part of my analysis looks at fundraising from Candidate Committees. Like the previous models, I use a linear regression in the hopes of explaining the variation among fundraising from these candidate committees. I had very few specific expectations about this type of political elite, as very little work has been done on them specifically. The explanatory power of these models is much less than the Party and PAC models, which may mean there are other, more personal factors that have an effect on donations from these committees.

It seems that none of the explanatory variables chosen had any statistically significant effect on fundraising for female candidates, and only *incumbent* is significant in the males only model. This is not wholly surprising; as stated above, not much research has been done on candidate committees, and it seems likely that more personal factors go into making decisions regarding the allocation of funds from these committees. Since they are often run at the discretion of another candidate, it seems very likely that these committees will donate to friends in Congress or to candidates whose ideologies align with their own. Given this logic, it is very surprising that *incumbent* is negative in the males only model, showing that on average, candidate committees donate less money to incumbents.

Quality candidate is also significant in the full model. This shows that on average, holding all else constant, candidate committees donate 143 dollars more to quality candidates. This finding aligns somewhat with the significant finding in the full model that candidate committees donate more money on average to incumbents.

The following section will look at the hypotheses presented earlier and whether support was found for these in the statistical models.

TABLE 5.1: VARIABLE DESCRIPTIONS

Variable	Description	Expectation
<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
Contributions	= Fundraising Totals in raw dollars from the Party, PACs, and Candidate Committees	
<i>Independent Variables</i>		
Gender	= 1 if female; 0 if male	— for Party model + for PAC model — for Cand. Comm. model
Incumbent	= 1 if incumbent; 0 otherwise	+ for female only models + for all full models
Open Seat	= 1 if seat is open; 0 otherwise	+ for all full models
Partisanship	= 1 for Democrat; 0 for Republican	+ for all full models + for all female only models
Quality Candidate	= Years of experience in elected office	+ for female only models + for all full models
District Partisanship	= Presidential two-vote share for Democratic Party	+ for all models
<i>Control Variables</i>		
Type of Primary	= 1 if open primary; 0 otherwise	
Total Candidates	= Number of candidates in the party's primary	
Election Years	= Separate variables for each year 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 year 2000 as reference category	

TABLE 5.2: LINEAR REGRESSION OF PARTY FUNDRAISING

	Full Model	Female Only	Male Only
Intercept	2154.080 (0.0000)	3114.77 (0.0005)	2013.490 (0.0000)
Gender	12.779 (0.9514)	n/a n/a	n/a n/a
Incumbent	542.979 (0.1718)	495.96 (0.5927)	575.374 (0.1913)
Open Seat	184.324* (0.0370)	58.64 (0.7812)	208.128* (0.0328)
Partisanship	-80.683 (0.6002)	-95.51 (0.8162)	-79.577 (0.6335)
Quality Candidate	-221.946 (0.2472)	39.09 (0.9322)	-268.821 (0.2040)
District Partisanship	-5.492 (0.3882)	-12.49 (0.4535)	-4.682 (0.4998)
Type of Primary	210.685 (0.3119)	440.98 (0.4008)	181.985 (0.4234)
Total Candidates	-49.990 (0.3099)	-85.92 (0.5186)	-45.412 (0.3925)
2002	-479.937 (0.0789)	-1357.06 (0.0557)	-343.412 (0.2467)
2004	-15.615 (0.9535)	-766.06 (0.2706)	107.869 (0.7153)
2006	-391.989 (0.1459)	-1261.03 (0.0664)	-246.312 (0.4015)
2008	-15.615 (0.9535)	-490.98 (0.4754)	47.662 (0.8701)
2010	-427.713 (0.0933)	-1388.66 (0.0361)	-271.915 (0.3254)
Full Model: n=6493, $R^2=0.19$, $F(13, 6493)=1.107$			
Female Only: n=1105, $R^2=0.07$, $F(12, 1105)=0.7492$			
Male Only: n=5388, $R^2=0.11$, $F(12, 5388)=0.9016$			

TABLE 5.3: LINEAR REGRESSION OF POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE FUNDRAISING

	Full Model	Female Only	Male Only
Intercept	1004.868 (0.0002)	1239.92 (0.0861)	998.534 (0.0009)
Gender	-18.282 (0.9117)	n/a n/a	n/a n/a
Incumbent	-578.192* (0.0642)	-837.98 (0.2670)	-500.001 (0.1458)
Open Seat	-142.823* (0.0398)	-87.79 (0.6095)	-156.097* (0.0403)
Partisanship	143.628 (0.2353)	472.02 (0.1585)	76.601 (0.5566)
Quality Candidate	378.916 * (0.0119)	510.12 (0.1728)	344.949* (0.0368)
District Partisanship	9.133* (0.068)	14.46 (0.2866)	7.093 (0.1905)
Type of Primary	102.840 (0.5301)	-342.65 (0.4227)	196.519 (0.2683)
Total Candidate	-48.442 (0.2107)	-59.00 (0.5861)	-46.352 (0.2637)
2002	-407.106 (0.0579)	-1384.81 (0.0165)	-234.243 (0.3109)
2004	-123.859 (0.5622)	-194.17 (0.7315)	-116.741 0.6131
2006	-287.057 (0.1755)	-1266.49 (0.0236)	-103.371 0.6520
2008	-25.996 (0.9017)	-263.66 (0.6378)	-14.406 0.9495
2010	-285.499 (0.1542)	-1028.42 (0.0565)	-161.239 0.4552
Full Model: n= 6493 ; $R^2 = 0.43$; F (13, 6493)=2.537			
Female Only: n= 1105 ; $R^2 = 0.23$; F(12, 1105) = 2.244			
Male Only: n=5388, $R^2=0.30$, F(12, 5388)=2.655			

TABLE 5.4: LINEAR REGRESSION OF CANDIDATE COMMITTEE FUNDRAISING

	Full Model	Female Only	Male Only
Intercept	563.395 (0.0000)	905.310 (0.0051)	510.086 (0.0001)
Gender	28.466 (0.6964)	n/a n/a	n/a n/a
Incumbent	-277.897* (0.0445)	-179.261 (0.5947)	-289.561* (0.0568)
Open Seat	41.998 (0.1721)	70.490 (0.3582)	36.218 (0.2819)
Partisanship	-65.811 (0.2193)	-124.873 (0.4031)	-52.713 (0.3603)
Quality Candidate	140.536* (0.0353)	215.479 (0.1969)	128.163 (0.0795)
District Partisanship	2.064 (0.3515)	-4.810 (0.4269)	3.253 (0.1746)
Type of Primary	-74.341 (0.3052)	-30.642 (0.8723)	-82.910 (0.2909)
Total Candidates	4.570 (0.7896)	17.781 (0.7132)	2.696 (0.88331)
2002	-126.080 (0.1847)	-314.786 (0.2217)	-97.247 (0.3421)
2004	52.480 (0.5791)	66.959 (0.7909)	47.763 (0.6399)
2006	-101.535 (0.2791)	-375.934 (0.1321)	-50.843 (0.6159)
2008	72.533 (0.4363)	157.956 (0.5275)	53.422 (0.5954)
2010	-86.279 (0.3306)	-240.232 (0.3180)	-60.129 (0.5288)
Full Model: n=6493, $R^2=0.26$, $F(13, 6493)=1.541$			
Female Only: n=1105, $R^2= 0.11$, $F(12, 1105)=1.095$			
Male Only: n=5388, $R^2=0.20$, $F(12, 5388)=1.086$			

Chapter 6

Discussion and Limitations

6.1 Gender

Various scholars have found that gender plays an increasingly important role in American elections. Whether this is a result of the types of campaigns women run (playing specifically to women voters, for example), or it is a result of voter perceptions about gender, or a result of other factors all together is still unclear. However, I hope that my analysis can add something new to the literature regarding this issue.

I will now take a look at the hypotheses I put forth regarding gender and fundraising, then determine whether I found support for that hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1a: Male candidates, regardless of challenger or incumbent status, will receive more money from party committees than females.

In looking back at the results from the party models, as well as some of the summary statistics, I believe I have found some limited support for this first hypothesis. Table 3 (“Descriptives of Candidate Fundraising”) shows that male candidates, on average, receive almost one hundred dollars more than their female counterparts from the party.

Although this only provides back-up on the surface, I believe that the regression analysis also provides support for this hypothesis.

Table 4 does not show any statistical support for this hypothesis. *Gender* was not a significant variable in this model. It seems that the traditional stereotypes that have been perpetuated regarding women and party support are fading.

Hypothesis 1b: Female candidates, regardless of challenger or incumbent status, will receive more money from PACs than males.

In order to examine whether there is support for Hypothesis 1b, I once again look back to Table 3. This shows that, on average, females receive over \$1300 more than male candidates from PACs. This finding does provide some evidence to back up my contention regarding PACs; however, I also need to examine the findings shown from the regressions for PACs. Unfortunately, *gender* was not a significant variable in this analysis. It is possible that other PACs (excluding female donor networks) donate enough money to male candidates to overshadow the effect in the statistical analyses.

Due to the extensive network of female donor networks, both federal and state, this is a surprising finding. Many of these provide early money to female candidates in order to kickstart their campaigns; for females, this is especially important as they have traditionally had a much more difficult time than males in soliciting donations. Previous research has shown that while females are good at raising money for charitable causes or other candidates, it is more difficult to ask for money for their own campaigns. However, if a PAC is willing to donate money to begin their campaigns, it may become easier for females to raise money because they are seen as more viable competitors.

Hypothesis 1c: Male candidates, regardless of challenger or incumbent status, will receive more money from candidate committees than females.

Given the lack of significant results in the candidate committee model, there is not much support for this hypothesis. In sum, I believe I have found support for Hypothesis

1a, mixed support for Hypothesis 1b, and little to no support for hypothesis 1c. This adds to the literature in an important way, as no other studies have focused specifically on gender when looking at fundraising from the Party and PACs.

6.2 Incumbents

I now turn to a discussion of my hypotheses regarding incumbents. Previous campaign literature has shown that incumbency provides a huge advantage, both when voters go to the polls, and in the perception that a candidate is “quality.” If a candidate is an incumbent, it has been shown that it is much easier to raise money, not only from individual donors, but from political elites as well. Furthermore, incumbents have an advantage in that they have an opportunity to amass a war chest in between election cycles, which provides an immediate financial advantage that is hard for challengers to overcome.

Hypothesis 2a: Female incumbents are more likely to receive more financial support from elites than female non-incumbents.

In looking at the results, I believe I do not have much support for this hypothesis. Incumbency is not significant with relation to the party, which may be explained by looking to previous literature. This shows that incumbency is often an indication that a candidate’s seat is safe, and therefore the parties may feel they do not need to concentrate on that race, or funnel as much money to those races. The war chests that candidates collect in between campaigns may also be an indication that female candidates do not need as much help from the party.

On the other hand, it seems that incumbency is important to PACs, though it is not significant in either the male or female only models. As discussed earlier, this may be due to several reasons, not the least of which is that the female donor networks are getting

overshadowed by the combination of the rest of the PACs that are active in the United States and donate to candidates of both genders.

In looking to candidate committees, it seems that incumbency is significant here. This does support the theory that candidate committees would want to support the candidates whose policies they are familiar with and preserve the collegial atmosphere in Congress without bringing in too many new members. With regards to female candidates, the lack of support may stem from an effort by male candidates to preserve the “boys club” atmosphere in Congress.

Hypothesis 2b: Female incumbents are more likely to receive more financial support from elites than male incumbents.

As far as Parties are concerned, incumbency is not significant in relation to either gender. This is an interesting finding, as I expected that incumbency would be an indication to the party that a female candidate (or, vice-versa, a male candidate) is viable and able to run a successful campaign.

Nor is *Incumbent* significant in the females-only PAC model. Despite not finding significance with this variable, it is possible that incumbency may be important, just not as important as other candidate characteristics to the PACs. Perhaps this is a function of the kinds of females that run for office—as shown in some of the descriptive statistics earlier in this thesis, a greater proportion of females that run are considered quality candidates. A possible reason for this is the greater difficulty that females have when attempting to break into politics on the national level; PACs are a great source of funding for female candidates, particularly those who have never conducted a campaign before.

Finally, I turn to examining candidate committees. As discussed previously, incumbency did have a statistically significant effect on fundraising from candidate committees, but not in the females-only model. I would have expected a larger positive effect from this variable.

Overall, I found little to no support for Hypotheses 2a and 2b. Since *Incumbent* was only significant to PACs, and there the greater effect was for males, I will reject this hypothesis. In future research, it may become more clear why exactly there is not a greater incumbency effect when looking at elite financial support.

6.3 Open Seat

My next hypothesis deals with open seats and the the competitiveness of a race. Previous literature has shown that races with incumbents are innately more competitive for challengers, and many newcomers to Congress make it there by winning open seat races. Other literatures has found that open seats attract stronger and more quality challengers. For these reasons I contended that female candidates participating in open seat races would receive more funds from elites.

Hypothesis 3: Female candidates in a race with an open seat will receive more funds from all types of political elites.

The party model and the PAC model both showed statistically significant effects from the *Open Seat* variable. It seems that open seat races have a positive effect on fundraising from the party, particularly with regards to males candidates, but this effect is opposite in the PAC model.

Unfortunately, I found little evidence to reject the null hypothesis in the regressions, either in the full models or in the parsed out, gender-exclusive models. This is an interesting finding, though I believe it is because the effects of *Quality Candidate* may at least partially outweigh the effects of the *Open Seat* variable. Perhaps it is only because there are other characteristics of female candidates—or their races—outweigh the importance of an open seat.

6.4 Partisanship

I will now turn to a discussion of my hypotheses dealing with the partisanship of the candidates. Given the findings in previous literature that says that women are considered more liberal than men, and women emerge more often in the Democratic party, I developed expectations regarding the partisanship of female candidates.

Hypothesis 4a: Democratic elites will be more likely to donate to their female candidates than Republican elites.

Table 4 displays the results of the Party model. *Partisanship* is not statistically significant in this case, and it is the main basis of the lack of support for this hypothesis. When the model includes only females, it shows that *Partisanship* is a not an indication of whether Party elites will support a candidate. Given that party committees and party elites are combined in the fundraising totals, I believe more evidence to reject this hypothesis could be found when funds donated from these two sources are separated out.

Hypothesis 4b: Democratic female candidates will receive more funds from all types of political elites than Republican female candidates.

Finally, I look at the support (or lack thereof) for Hypothesis 4b. Once again, given the results of the Party model presented in Table 4, I believe I have found some preliminary evidence to reject this hypothesis, but I do feel that I need more analysis. I am not prepared to reject the null hypothesis in this case.

6.5 Quality

I now begin a discussion of my hypotheses regarding Quality. I believed this was important to include because of previous literature, which indicates that quality challengers

are more likely to win because of more extensive resources, experience, networking, and name recognition. I contended that this would be important in drawing in more campaign contributions than if a candidate were not a quality candidate.

Hypothesis 5a: Quality challengers who are female are more likely to receive higher campaign contributions overall than non-quality challengers.

In examining this first hypothesis, I rely on the parsed-out female models for each type of elite. For the party model, I do not find much support for this. Quality does not seem to be as much of a consideration for the parties when looking at female candidates, which is an interesting finding. I believe this is the case because, once again, in order for a female candidate to reach this level in politics, she must inherently have characteristics of a quality challenger.

Moving on to Political Action Committees, I find that quality is not an indicator for PACs to donate to female candidates. Since quality is an indicator of success in the election, PACs should be more likely to make an investment in that candidate in order to have a better shot of getting those females into office. Especially given that the goal of many female-centric PACs is simply to put more women into higher political offices, it follows that these PACs will concentrate their funds on the women who are most likely to reach that goal. However, the model does not indicate that this is the case.

Finally, I move on to the candidate committees. Once again, *Quality Candidate* is not a significant variable. I believe this is because there are outside factors that are unaccounted for in this model that have larger effects on the fundraising decisions of these committees.

Hypothesis 5b: Quality challengers who are female are more likely to receive higher campaign contributions from political elites, particularly the party, than if she were not a quality challenger.

I find mixed support for hypothesis 5b. In comparing the female models with the male models, I find partial support for this hypothesis. Quality is significant in the full PAC model as well as the male PAC model, but not the female model; it is also significant in the full candidate committee model.

I believe this variable could benefit from a more nuanced version of the coding; as I described, *Quality Candidate* is a dummy variable representing whether or not the candidate had held an elected office previously. Perhaps by following in the lead of other scholars, who operationalize quality with various scales to incorporate more types of public service, celebrity status, etc., I would be able to get more significant results.

6.6 District Partisanship

Finally, I move to a discussion of Hypothesis 6, which deals with the district characteristics. I contended that certain characteristics would make women more likely to run, and these same characteristics would make women more likely to win. These districts are typically Democrat, and I believe that this will be an indicator that political elites will support these candidates more often than if women were running in a district that skews Republican. Hypothesis 6 is presented below.

Hypothesis 6: In districts that typically vote Democrat, political elites will be more likely to support female candidates than if they were running in districts that typically vote Republican.

I found little support for my hypothesis in the models, as *District Partisanship* was only significant in the full PAC model, but only indicated a 9 dollar increase in funding on average. I believe that this effect may partially be smothered by the combined effects of *Incumbent* and *Partisanship*, particularly with regards to the candidate committee model. Together, these variables may outweigh the effect of *District Partisanship* in that

it may not be something that elites consider at all in their fundraising decisions. Given the volatile nature of politics in many areas in recent years, there is always a chance for an upset and elites may be concentrating less on previous election results and more on quality candidates and their partisanship.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Revisiting the Theoretical Framework

This study addressed a few major questions with regards to fundraising in primary elections. Foremost among these is why do some candidates receive more money than other candidates from political elites? Since this study focused primarily on the effects of gender on fundraising, how does that particular characteristic affect the dynamic between candidates and political elites?

Gender has always been an important consideration for voters. Whether it is intentional or not, voters use gender as a cue to inform their decision in the voting booth. This leads to a gender gap and a lack of representation for females in Congress. However, I used this study to examine whether there were also underlying stereotypes among political elites that led to a lack of female candidates, which in turn would lead to a lack of representation and the gender gap among voters.

Among political elites, gender did not seem to be an important predictor for fundraising decisions. Although some variables did come back as statistically significant, gender was not one of those. I believe that gender is not significant in this study primarily be-

cause a greater percentage of women are quality candidates who political elites are more likely to take seriously.

Despite the findings regarding gender, it is still apparent that some candidates receive more money than other candidates. Why is this true? For political elites, it seems that many factors go into making a decision of where to donate money, yet there is not a stand out variable that can indicate above others why and how political elites allocate funds. It seems that a combination of variables goes into fundraising decisions, and it is possible that this study simply does not encompass all of those potential variables.

7.2 Implications

The ability of female candidates in congressional elections to obtain elite support has far reaching and practical implications. The perception that female candidates are disadvantaged in fundraising can inhibit party elites from supporting their candidacies (Uhlaner and Scholzman 1986). This perception that women will have a harder time raising money can also inhibit potential female candidates from seeking elective office at all. “Therefore, the assumption that women candidates are disadvantaged with respect to campaign finance has potential consequences, regardless of its veracity” (Uhlaner and Scholzman 1986). According to Burrell (2003), when the conventional wisdom that women are inadequate fundraisers goes untested, women will continue to be underrepresented. The support of party elites is more than just a symbolic label of candidate viability. In a very practical sense, if women aren’t receiving financial support from political elites they may be less willing to seek office at all (Burrell 1994).

The results presented in these models show that the predictors for fundraising for male and female congressional candidates in the primaries coming from party, PACs, and candidate committees are different: for female candidates, it seems that partisanship is

an important predictor, while open seat, incumbency, and quality candidate status are more important for male candidates.

Despite the lack of statistically significant findings, I do believe that this study contributes something important to the literature. It has been shown in previous research that there are differences in fundraising and in the success rates of male and female candidates for office. These differences are important and have real world implications, whether or not I found statistically significant answers for the questions that were posed by this study.

However, it seems that these implications may not be as important going forward in the future. During the 2012 election, women made huge gains and beginning in the 113th Congress, there will be more women than ever serving in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. It seems that voters—and political elites—are finally recognizing that female candidates are on an equal playing field as male candidates and deserve to have equal representation in government.

7.3 Further Studies

In conclusion, I will discuss several possibilities for expanding this analysis, as well as ideas for future studies. Given the results presented in this thesis, I believe that with some work on the hypotheses and a change in the coding of some of the variables, I will find support for more of these hypothesis. Simply rejecting the hypotheses that I did not find support for—or because the variables are not statistically significant—is too easy. In changing the coding, particularly of the *Quality Candidate* variable, I believe I could find results to support hypotheses 5a and 5b. In the future, I would like to correct this and look at the analysis once more in the hopes of finding support for this.

Furthermore, I believe subdividing the analysis once more into the separate parties—i.e., separate out Democrats from Republicans—would provide some new hypotheses and

interesting results. In looking at not just differences between male and female candidates, but the differences between male and female candidates in each party, I believe further understanding of what actually affects donations from political elites would become clear.

Expanding this study in this particular way would help to overcome one of the biggest limitations of this study. I am currently not able to compare candidates within races, and at least as far as more competitive races are concerned, the quality of the opponent often has a large effect on whether political elites contribute to candidates.

This study could also benefit from the refinement of the incumbency effect. It was not what I expected to find, and I believe that more work needs to be done in this area in order to fully understand the effects that incumbency has on the decision of political elites to donate to a specific candidate.

I would also like to expand this study to include the general election. Although the primaries provide a valuable opportunity to examine elections that include both male and female candidates of the same party, the general election provides an opportunity to examine what types of candidate characteristics influence donations once a candidate has gained their party's nomination. Furthermore, I believe that there may be more differences in fundraising once the general election is reached because these elections are more important and much higher visibility to both voters and political elites.

I also believe that more work needs to be done on candidate committees as a whole. Only a small amount of literature has focused on this unique sector of political elites. Candidate committees are inherently interesting because they are run by the candidate, or at least by the candidate's campaign. What types of candidates do these committees choose to donate to? What is the money primarily used for? What is their overall effect on the success of a candidate? These are interesting questions that need to be answered by the literature as a whole.

Finally, an interesting expansion of this study would be into the timing of donations for candidates. Outside of the differences found in who political elites choose to donate to, I believe that important and interesting effects can be found in examining the timing of those donations. Specifically, further study in this area should include what types of candidates draw in early money. Do PACs primarily give early money to female candidates? What are some of the characteristics that attract political elites to give early money to candidates in general?

This study has shown that gender has an important impact on funding for candidates. It affects the decisions made by all types of political elites: the parties, political action committees, and candidate committees. Although further study is still needed in this area due to the lack of scholarly research, I believe this study has shown that gender is an important characteristic that should be taken into account when looking at decisions to donate to candidates.

Chapter 8

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