

Pink Money, Blue Money: The Impact of State Political Context on the Relationship Between Gender and Campaign Finance

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ABSTRACT

In the era of modern campaigning, with the expenses of advertising and polling, among others, ample funds are necessary but not universally accessible to all candidates. This study addresses the relationship between candidate gender and campaign fundraising, and the possible mediating impact of three dimensions of the state political context – legislative professionalism, Republican party strength, and regional culture (South vs. Nonsouth). Ultimately, the findings suggest that after controlling for other candidate characteristics, as well as district and state contexts, no statistically significant relationship between candidate gender and fundraising exists. In addition, there appears to be little variation in the effect of gender across the three dimensions of state political context.

INTRODUCTION

As we continue in the 21st century, women on the international stage have earned increasingly powerful roles in government. No longer relegated to solely local or less important political offices, women are now regularly elected to prominent positions, including important legislative, executive, judicial, and administrative offices. According to the Pew Research Center, 63 nations have elected a woman as to the chief executive position, including Germany (Angela Merkle) and Great Britain (Margaret Thatcher) (DeSilver, 2015). The value of the female experience and the need for diverse perspectives seems to finally be achieving equal recognition after a historical legacy of sex-based exclusion and oppression.

Yet in the United States, arguably one of the greatest modern democracies, women still hold only a fraction of the important political offices that guide the policy and politics of our country and states. The United States has witnessed an increase in women's participation, both in running for office and getting elected, but this trend still falls short of parity with the population proportion and remains well behind most other modernized nations. Nearly a century after securing suffrage and earning the right to vote, women remain underrepresented in all branches of both state and federal government. For example, after the 2014 elections, women comprise only 19.4 percent of the U.S. Congress, one-third of the Supreme Court, and the presidency has always been occupied by men (Center for American Women and Politics, 2015).

Women's involvement in elected office is more prevalent in state and local positions, however, the levels of descriptive representation in these arenas are far from equitable. The percentage of women in state legislatures averages around 24 percent and no state legislature achieves a balance comparable to the constituency population (Colorado being the closest with 41 percent of its state legislature female in 2015) (Center for American Women and Politics, 2015). Governorships are likewise dominated by men (after the 2014 elections, only 6 of 50 states boast female chief executives) and other lower positions in the state executive branch follow suit (Center for American Women and Politics, 2015). The low numbers of women in elected office, at all levels and branches of government, is not only disappointing for representative democracy, but remains the reality of the political arena in the 21st century.

Numerous studies have sought to understand the gender gap in representation. Over the past thirty years, explanations underscoring the social and economic climate, institutional features, and political barriers have been offered to explain why fewer women are elected to government offices in comparison to men. Earlier theories rooted in societal norms that claimed women were viewed as being incapable or disinterested in politics have long since been debunked and a number of prominent and successful female politicians have demonstrated women's effectiveness both in the polls and on the assembly floor. Women are likewise becoming increasingly more educated and actually out-graduating their male peers from undergraduate institutions (Goldin, Katz, & Kuziemko, 2006). Though they still earn less than men, women play a more active role in careers outside the home; a trend that economists believe will only continue (Kessler-Harris, 2003).

Given that women's roles in political engagement are now socially permissible and even encouraged, one of the most important barriers to the election of women lies in their ability to mount an effective campaign. Critical to such efforts is fundraising. In the era of the modern campaign, necessitating frequent advertising in expensive media markets, mass mailings, telephone communication to voters, and a team of professional consultants, ample financial support is instrumental to electoral success (Stratmann, 1991, Stratmann, 2006). Studies have addressed the challenges of campaign fundraising for female candidates (Burrell, 1985; Green, 2003; Hogan, 2007; Crespin & Deitz, 2010), including the recent proliferation of female-centered PACs (such as Emily's List or Wish List) aimed at mitigating the "early-money" gap that divides victorious campaigns from unsuccessful ones (Nelson, 1995; Francia, 2001). Much of this research has concentrated on a particular state and a single presumed barrier. To date, there has been no recent multi-state study that examines the effects of a variety of explanatory variables, such as partisanship, cultural differences, and institutional professionalization on the gender gap in state campaign fundraising.

In this paper, I examine the effect of gender on campaign fundraising in state legislative elections. Restricting the focus to state legislative campaigns provides a consistent mode of comparison and offers a significant number of observations to control for a host of district and state-level characteristics. Utilizing a sample that includes 15 states, 2,048 legislative seats, and a total of 2,760 candidates running for public office (683 of them female), I conduct a fixed-effects regression analysis of the effect of gender on state legislative candidate fundraising, as well as the mediating effects legislative professionalization, state partisanship, and state culture. After controlling for candidate, district and state-level factors, I find that there is no statistically significant effect of gender on campaign fundraising. In addition, there appears to be little variation in the effect of gender across the three dimensions of state political context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Barbara Burrell (1990) is among the first scholars to determine that although fewer women run for office compared to men, women who run actually fare well compared to their male opponents. Subsequent studies found that, when all other factors are equal, this original assessment continues to hold true (Dolan, 2004; Fox, 2006; Hogan, 2001). This is also accurate for state-level races, as Tracy Osborn (2012) found in her examination of the women's representation in state legislatures. Success in campaign fundraising for female candidates ultimately relates to partisanship, social values, institutional features, and the variety of campaign contributions.

First, the relationship between gender and campaign finance is influenced by the candidate's partisan affiliations. Matland and King (2002) found that for Democratic candidates, gender was for the most part irrelevant. For Republican candidates, a woman would generally incur a significant difficulty in obtaining their party's endorsement, but once running on the Republican ticket, they would gain support from moderate Democrats and independents, while retaining much of their Republican-base. Kathleen Dolan (2008) argues that partisanship is related to the public perception of female candidates and the individual voter's opinion of female candidates, both which also play a significant role in election results.

The implications of social values and how women are perceived is also important in understanding how much money they are able to raise as candidates, relative to their male counterparts. Earlier research focused on gender socialization, noting that politics was often considered a man's game and it was unacceptable for women to participate in politics or fundraising (Lee, 1977; King, 1977; Stoper, 1977; Welch, 1978; Flammang, 1997). While the old adage does not necessarily apply in the 21st century, social factors are still cited as impediments to women's involvement, particularly family and support structures that complicate the decision to run for a woman in comparison to a man (Lawless, Fox, & Freely, 2001; Carroll & Sanbonmatsu, 2009). Women and men initially exhibit similar levels of interests in running for office, but when women are ignored for candidacy in a particular position, they will pass on the opportunity without ample encouragement and support (Lawless and Fox, 2004). As early fundraising initiatives are critical, deciding not to run or waiting until late in the election cycle can have serious implications.

Next, other studies note institutional features, such as term limits and single-member districts, can exhibit inherent biases against women's decision to run campaigns (Carroll, 1994; Carroll & Jenkins, 2001; Darcy, Welch, & Clark, 1994; Rule, 1981). When men face less socialized and economic obstacles towards conducting a successful bid for a position, women are more likely to struggle in single-member districts competing against men, rather than in multimember districts with more than two candidates. Term limits typically yield positive results in allowing more women to compete for public office, though these do not exist in all legislatures. Incumbency, a powerful variable in American politics on nearly any level, is even more pervasive, as men already obtain an overwhelming majority of the elected offices and the benefits of this minimize the chances of a female challenger winning in a race. The benefits of incumbency extend to fundraising, and give the current seat holder an edge in not only name recognition and experience, but financing a campaign to further remind voters of such.

Finally, another reason women may be less inclined to run for public office is because of the process of campaigning itself that can require women to make challenging decisions less likely to be incurred by their male competitors (Rule, 1988; Lawless & Fox, 2004). Though women enjoy fundraising and personal campaigning working on self-promotion as much as their male counterparts, they also must do more of it in order to achieve the same level of recognition with the voters and the time necessary to establish this is time that is needed to cultivate other aspects of the campaign as well.

For female candidates who are more likely to come into the race at a disadvantage (by having worked in politics less than their male counterparts and encountering more social prejudices against her bid), partisanship and fundraising are essential. Individual and PAC contributions can make a significant difference in the ultimate success of a campaign. Given the prevailing importance of PAC endorsement, female candidates are in a particularly vulnerable state, where the support of a PAC, especially early in the campaign, can really make a needed

difference in the eventual outcome of the race (Connor Green, 2004). Partisanship plays a role in PAC support, as well, particularly given the saliency of certain gendered political issues (Day, Hadley, & Duffy Brown, 2001; Day & Hadley, 2002).

Donors, both as individuals and as heads of PACs, want to support candidates they believe have solid potential at being able to win. Funds are needed, of course, as a part of doing this, however PACs wait to review candidates carefully and precisely choose who will receive not only their hearty endorsement, but additionally their financial weight. It is a problematic cycle in one sense: as the more women who win, the more PACs will choose to support them, the more PACs contribute to women's races, the more women will win. Because of the recurring nature of this relationship, it is difficult for women running for office to secure PAC support and it is risky for PACs to contribute until they are confident in the potential of the candidacy. It is critical to note PACs that specifically focus on bundling campaign contributions towards female candidates, such as EMILY's List (for Democrats) and WISH List (for Republicans) devote their efforts to select states. This is likely to do with the perceived viability of the candidates and the fact that few women have established political careers, making the prospect of future expansion uncertain.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

As the literature review suggests, numerous studies examine the differences in gender and campaigning through a variety of angles, but none assesses the impact of state difference with regards to fundraising. This gap in the research leads us to wonder how the fundraising gap between male and female candidates may vary among different states (with different institutions, partisanship, geographic location, etc.). Because states are dissimilar in some characteristics and yet comparable in their institutional structure (bimodal legislatures) and selection apparatus (democratic elections), they serve as an excellent way to understand the role these differences play in the gender gap in fundraising.

To better understand the differences among states, this study will test four primary hypotheses that concentrate on state-level variation in campaign fundraising within the context of state legislative elections. First, following the trajectory of the previous literature, I hypothesize that, on the whole, male candidates will garner more in fundraising compared to female candidates. This gap, however, will depend on the level of institutional professionalization, the strength of the Democratic Party's presence, and the geographic location of the states.

The second hypothesis focuses on the impact of institutional professionalization on the gender gap in campaign funding. The more professionalized state legislatures appear more attractive to candidates, offering increased accessibility of resources (including salary and staff) and competition for such resources. A more professionalized state enables one to work solely as a legislator and, coinciding with the power and prestige, encourages competition for these desirable seats, weeding out less viable (and less well-funded) candidates early in the primaries to ensure a higher quality match for the general elections. A less professionalized state legislature offers a much lower salary commensurate with a citizen legislature and a smaller staff. This requires the legislator to maintain a full-time occupation that is both flexible and economically advantageous, one that women who already earn less and occupy fewer managerial roles are equally less likely to hold. I believe that states that are more professionalized will demonstrate fewer differences (if any) in gendered campaign fundraising effects. Following the imagery established by Blair (1988) and reemphasized by Fiorina (1994) that certain professions are more conducive to enabling individuals to run for office in these less professionalized states

and adding that these positions are usually occupied by white men, it would follow that less professionalized legislatures draw fewer non-white women to compete.

The third hypothesis asserts that partisanship at the state level is influential in the gender gap in campaign finance. The presence and strength of the party is influential in fundraising and can explain the propensity of certain states to prefer candidates from a particular party. Coupled with the notion that female candidates remain most often Democratic (though the number of Republican women has grown slightly), I hypothesize that women running in Democratic-leaning states exhibit fewer fundraising disparities compared to men, with regards to a more substantial gap between women and men in more Republican-leaning states. As more women are likely to be Democrat, they are also more likely to get money from that party and a Democratic state signifies one that accepts the party's platform, which is generally more progressive on women's issues and issues of liberty and equality. Thus, I believe the gap will widen between men and women in Republican-leaning states compared to men and women in Democratic-leaning states.

The final hypothesis maintains that the unique political culture of the South is influential in the gender gap in fundraising, resulting in a greater disparity between male and female candidates. The South has been historically both very conservative with regards to gender equality and also one-party dominated (originally by the Democrats following Reconstruction and now, following a realignment, by the Republicans). This distinctive social and political climate is unique and suggests that a gender-based gap in fundraising would be exaggerated within the South, compared to the non-South states. Coupling the disadvantages of female composition (Southern states consistently rank among the lowest in women's involvement), economic equality, and partisan strength, I hypothesize that the fundraising gap between male and female candidates will be greater outside the South, rather than within it.

TABLE 1. HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1	Male candidates will fundraise more money than female candidates in state legislative elections, when all other mitigating factors (quality, leadership, etc.) are held constant.
Hypothesis 2	The effect of gender (i.e. the difference in dollars raised between male candidates and female candidates) will diminish as the professionalism of a state's legislature increases.
Hypothesis 3	The effect of gender (i.e. the difference in dollars raised between male candidates and female candidates) will diminish as the strength of the Democratic party in a state increases.
Hypothesis 4	The effect of gender (i.e. the difference in dollars raised between male candidates and female candidates) will be larger in the South than outside the South.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the relationship between gender and the amount of money raised for state legislative campaigns, I conduct a review of the public campaign finance record for a sample of 15 states during the 2006 election cycle. The states included in the sample are carefully selected to ensure variation in their level of state legislative professionalization, regional location, and state partisanship. Among the most important variables, however, the average of the total dollar amount fundraised is \$129,050 and women comprise 22.8%, which is

close to the national average of 24.5% (Facts on Women in State Legislatures, 2012). The table below (Table 2) lists the states used in this analysis, along with data for several relevant contextual variables.

TABLE 2. STATES SELECTED FOR CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING COMPARISON

State	Professional. of Legislature ∞	Campaign Finance Laws	Geographic Region	State Partisanship δ	Gender Composition *
Alabama	Moderate	Open	South	R - 56.35%	Low (12.9%)
California	High	Moderate	West	D - 52.95%	Mod (27.5%)
Colorado	Moderate	Restrictive	West	R - 49.41%	High (38.0%)
Connecticut	Moderate	Restrictive	Northeast	D - 54.35%	High (32.1%)
Georgia	Slightly Low	Restrictive	South	R - 53.22%	Low (19.1%)
Illinois	Slightly High	Open	Midwest	D - 54.58%	Mod (28.2%)
Iowa	Moderate	Open	Midwest	D - 49.34%	Mod (23.2%)
Michigan	High	Moderate	Midwest	D - 51.40%	Mod (25.0%)
Mississippi	Slightly Low	Open	South	R - 55.42%	Low (14.4%)
Nevada	Slightly Low	High	West	R - 47.63%	High (31.7%)
New York	High	Restrictive	Northeast	D - 59.35%	Mod (24.1%)
North Dakota	Low	Open	Midwest	R - 56.82%	Low (17.0%)
South Carolina	Moderate	Moderate	South	R - 54.90%	Low (10.0%)
Wisconsin	Slightly High	High	Midwest	D - 48.78%	Mod (22.0%)
Wyoming	Low	Moderate	West	R - 62.14%	Low (16.7%)
Average	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	24.5%
∞ as defined by the National Center of State Legislatures ©2012					
δ the average of state presidential votes for the three previous elections, from data available by the Federal Election Commission © 1996, 2000, & 2004					
* from data available by the Center for American Women in Politics ©2010					

Data is collected from the authentic ballots secured by the Board of Elections (at the state level) and financial donor reports available through the databases of the Institute for Money in State Politics. Additional demographic information about individual candidates is gathered through individual research on independent candidates (via their campaign websites, party websites, and press releases). This conservative approach to ensure the accuracy of the data occasionally leads to some observations (candidates) being dropped from the set for incomplete available information.¹ The dataset consists of a total number of 2,760 Republican and

Democratic general election candidates running in a total number of 2,105 legislative races, and who raised at least \$1,000. Third-party candidates are excluded due to the fact that these candidates rarely raise much money and, with rare exception, are not successful at the ballot box. Finally, the \$1,000 threshold for inclusion in the sample ensures that candidates who filed for the election but never truly conducted a campaign (and therefore were not serious or viable) are not a part of this analysis; this cut-off is conservative to ensure no unnecessary eliminations were made (Vonnahme, 2012).

To test the hypotheses, an ordinary least squares regression is used, establishing the individual candidate as the primary unit of analysis and utilizing the total dollar amount raised as the dependent variable.

$$y(\text{total dollar amount}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{gender}) + \beta_2(\text{party}) + \beta_3(\text{assembly}) + \beta_4(\text{quality}) + \beta_5(\text{primary competition}) + \beta_6(\text{leadership}) + \beta_7(\text{incumbency}) + \beta_8(\text{open seat}) + \beta_9(\text{district economic affluence}) + \beta_{10}(\text{district education attainment}) + \beta_{11}(\text{moderately professionalized institution}) + \beta_{12}(\text{highly professionalized institution}) + \beta_{13}(\text{state partisanship}) + \beta_{14}(\text{geographic location}) + \varepsilon$$

The independent variables included in this analysis capture qualities at the individual candidate level, the individual election/district level, and the state level. The variables denoting difference at the individual candidate level include partisanship, incumbency, open seat, challenger, leadership position (within the assembly), and candidate quality. Partisanship can play a substantial role in the involvement of racial and ethnic minorities, as the earlier literature review suggests, and can also be influential in fundraising. As noted earlier, candidates identifying as independent or not running under either the Democrat or Republican parties were rare and excluded for the purposes of the study.

Traditional variables noted for their relationship to fundraising are also incorporated. Incumbency and open seat status are used individually as dichotomous responses, as well as intra-assembly leadership because of their relationship to fundraising (Biersack, Herrnson, & Wilcox, 1993; Krasno, Green, & Cowden, 1994). If the individual previously held a high position within that particular chamber, such as Speaker of the House, then that is included as a control as well (Sorauf, 1992). A candidate running for reelection who is the current Speaker might garner more campaign funds for his/her higher position of power, but it is possible that by attaining such status, that legislator has a long political legacy, which would diminish the need for excessive fundraising. Finally, the perceived viability of the candidate is assessed to determine if the candidate was a quality candidate (Jacobson & Kernell, 1983; Bond, Covington, & Fleisher, 1985).²

Additional variables include the presence of opposition in the primary election and specific district level data including the educational and poverty levels. Opposition in either the primary or general election is important to include in the data set. Whether an opponent existed (within one's own party in the primary competition or on the opposing party in the general competition) could impact the total amount of money raised (Jacobson, 2004; Mutz, 1995). Though this analysis looks strictly at the total amount of funds raised (disregarding the points of time in the campaign in which they were secured), the influence competition would have on the overall total is worth consideration. Primary competition accounts for races in which there was an opponent present (again, affecting fundraising).

Using data available from the 2000 Census provide variables for educational and poverty levels within the district. District educational attainment is measured as the percentage of adults over age 25 who held a high school diploma. District poverty levels encompassed all adults over age 25 who were at or below the poverty level (US Census, 2000).

These variables capture two important district characteristics that are influential in the gender and fundraising relationship. The district-level economic affluence variable concerns how much money individuals within the district have, which would be influential in the amount they choose to give (as donors) and the amount needed to win (as candidates). A race in a poor, rural district would likely require a lower threshold of fundraising to conduct a competitive candidacy, whereas a race in an affluent, suburban or metropolitan area might require more. This measure can be indicative of participation and also relates to economic affluence (through the positive relationship between education and income).

Finally, to capture differences among the states in the analysis, variables denoting the state partisanship, level of professionalization, and regional location are noted. The partisanship of the state, that is, the way in which a state tends to lean, could be influential in fundraising outcomes; a state that leans heavily Democrat is likely to yield candidates who are Democrat and may garner less in fundraising totals, as the cultural preference already favors that party. Alternately, in such a one-party slanted state, the propensity of Democratic voters likely corresponds to more generous donors, so those candidates may secure more funds. This measure is calculated as the average vote share for the Republican candidate from the three most recent presidential elections prior to 2006 (1996, 2000, and 2004).

The state professionalization variable depicts the level of institutional professionalization of the legislature, following the categorizations established by the National Conference of State Legislatures and includes differences such as salary, staff size, and number of days in office per session. This measure is divided into three categories denoting whether the state was “more professionalized,” “moderately professionalized,” or “less professionalized.” Finally, the geographic location of the states are noted by the boundaries established by the US Census and were then accompanied by the dichotomous component, separating them into “South” and “Non-South” groups.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To estimate the effects of these variables on campaign funding, I utilize an ordinary least squares model, with standard errors adjusted for clustering at the state level. I first estimated an additive model, the results of which are displayed below in Table 3. Because the dependent variable is measured as the log of total funds raised, the coefficients can be interpreted as the proportional change in the dependent variable given a one-unit increase in the independent variable.

TABLE 3. FUNDS AND GENDER OLS MODEL

	Estimate	Std. Error	T-Value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	11.454	1.634	7.01	0.000 ***
Gender	-0.037	0.073	-0.51	0.620
Assembly	0.809	0.096	8.42	0.000 ***
Quality	0.594	0.139	4.26	0.001 **
Primary Competition	0.411	0.117	3.52	0.003 **
Leadership	1.109	0.317	3.50	0.004 **

Incumbency	0.299	0.126	2.38	0.032 *
Open Seat	0.942	0.089	10.49	0.000 ***
Candidate Party	-0.066	0.113	-0.58	0.569
District Poverty	-0.937	0.523	-1.79	0.095
District Education	0.046	0.032	1.46	0.167
Moderate Professionalization	0.669	0.374	1.79	0.095
High Professionalization	1.552	0.579	2.68	0.018 *
Southern States	1.413	0.325	4.34	0.001 ***
State Partisanship	-0.062	0.029	-2.15	0.050 *
Significance	0.001 ‘***’	0.01 ‘**’	0.05 ‘*’	
Number of Observations: 2,760				
Multiple R-squared: 0.3824, Root MSE: 1.2098				
Std. Err. adjusted for 15 clusters in states				

The results reveal that the impact of the assembly of the race, the candidate’s quality, and the candidate’s leadership were all highly statistically significant, however, once these are taken in consideration, there is no statistically significant difference for the fundraising totals between male and female candidates. The assembly in which the candidacy was focused yields a $p > |t|$ (0.000) with a coefficient of 0.809, indicating that candidates running for the state senate raised an average of 81% more compared their counterparts running for the state house. The candidate’s quality (having won a political election in the past) achieves a $p > |t|$ (0.000) with a coefficient of 0.594, which follows that with more experience and better networks, quality candidates would out raise political novices. Likewise, the candidate’s leadership (holding a high level position within the assembly) demonstrates a positive relationship to fundraising, generating a highly statistically significant $p > |t|$ (0.001) with a coefficient of 1.109.

The measure encompassing the presence of competition in the primary race achieves statistical significance. Candidates faced with competition in the primaries generally raise 41.1% more than those without competition ($p > |t|$ (0.003)). Candidates who ran as incumbents, not surprisingly, indicate slight statistical significance ($p > |t|$ (0.032)), raising 29.8% more on the whole. Likewise, candidates who ran for open seats (where the incumbent was not seeking reelection) raise 94.2% more with a $p > |t|$ (0.000). These findings correspond with expectations as established by previous literature and reaffirm their value as control variables in this assessment. The candidate’s gender exhibits a small impact (-0.037) that is not statistically significant and thus the hypothesis of a gender gap is not upheld.

A series of interaction models examine the specific hypotheses, focusing on effects within the relationship of gender and fundraising. The models were run separately and are included in the appendices (Tables 1-3) but are comprised here in a single’ table in the interest of space. The first interactive model (noted below in Table 4) examines the impact of institutional professionalization, corresponding to the second hypothesis that the more professionalized legislatures would exhibit less of a disparity in fundraising. The interaction between gender and moderately professionalized state legislatures result in a coefficient of 0.149 without statistical significance, noting the difference between less professionalized state legislatures and moderately professionalized ones. The interaction between gender and highly professionalized

state legislatures result in a smaller but statistically significant coefficient of -0.039, indicating the difference between the highly and the less professionalized state legislatures and gender. This finding is particularly interesting because it indicates a special dynamic occurring in the highly professionalized state legislatures that yields a small but noteworthy difference in the gender gap in fundraising. Female candidates in these legislatures consistently fundraise 3.9% less relative to their counterparts, which could have important implications on their campaigns.

TABLE 4. HYPOTHESES #2-4: FUNDS AND GENDER MODEL WITH STATE PROFESSIONALIZATION, PARTISANSHIP, AND REGIONAL INTERACTION EFFECTS

Coefficients				
	Estimate	Std. Error	T-Value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	11.433	1.634	7.00	0.000 ***
Gender * Mod. Professionalization	0.149	0.205	0.73	0.476
Gender * High Professionalization	-0.039	0.205	-0.19	0.050 *
Gender * Party Interaction	0.014	0.012	1.21	0.247
Gender * South Interaction	-0.031	0.219	-0.15	0.887
Significance	0.001 '***'	0.01 '**'	0.05 '*'	

The third hypothesis, stating that partisanship is influential, yields no statistically significant relationship between the overall partisan affiliations of the states and the candidate's gender. The resulting coefficient of the interaction is very marginal (0.014).

Finally, the fourth hypothesis surmised that the South would demonstrate greater campaign finance disparities between male and female candidates compared to non-Southern states. Though the Southern states are generally Republican, this analysis differs from the previous model as it specifically examines the regional differences that would not be detected in the earlier analysis. The interactional effect between Southern states and gender results in a very small coefficient of -0.005, but is not statistically significant.

In all of the interactive effect regressions, the percentage of women's earnings relative to men's (a proportional measure of average income) attain slight statistical significance with positive coefficients. These findings suggest that states where women are closer to parity in wage earnings relative to men also denote a minimized fundraising difference. For state partisanship, the difference is 1.4%, for Southern states, the difference increases to 3.1%, and for professionalization, the difference is 14.9% for moderately professionalized and 3.9% for highly professionalized legislatures.

Overall, the results are mixed. The impact of legislative professionalization affirms the hypothesis that the more professionalized the state, the less disparity between male and female candidates fundraising totals. Similarly, state partisanship proves to be influential (though weak), wherein more Democratic states denote less difference in fundraising compared to states that were more Republican. Additionally, the findings testing the Southern hypothesis demonstrate a positive, but very weak relationship.

These findings are unexpected but provoke discussion about the relationship between gender and fundraising as well as the way that professionalization, partisanship, and region are influential. A gendered disparity in fundraising is not upheld, as the difference was marginal, with women fundraising just under 4% relative to men, and it is not statistically significant. This

suggests that while a larger gender gap in representation remains, campaign finance, at least with regards to the total amount raised, is likely not the source of women's underrepresentation.

The professionalization of the institution had little impact on the women's fundraising, though the highly professionalized state legislatures did denote a small (3.9%) gap between male and female candidates that was statistically significant. Because the more professionalized institutions are more attractive to potential office holders (accompanied with larger salary, staff, and tenure power), these races are also more competitive and likely whittle away competition so only the most competitive candidates remain in the general election.

The state partisanship and Southern states fail to achieve statistical significance, and the lack of relationship in both of these models was surprising. The partisanship hypothesis predicted that because women tend to run on and support the Democratic Party ticket, that states leaning more Democrat would exhibit less of a gender disparity in terms of funds. Yet the results found no such relationship. This could be attributed to an imperfect measure of state partisanship (summarizing the total percentage of the popular vote in three presidential elections) or the lack of gender difference within the political parties.

Perhaps most unanticipated, women running in Southern states do not exhibit greater disparities than women running elsewhere. While fewer women do run and win in Southern state legislatures, they could also garner larger percentages of PAC and individual donations that specifically seek out female candidates, as there are fewer in elections and they would therefore take a larger share relative to races where more women run. This relationship is still unclear but what this study does show is that a gender gap in fundraising is not larger in Southern states.

CONCLUSION

The impact of state-level variations proves to be insightful into the relationship between gender and campaign finance. Given that the economic, social, political, and institutional diversity varies widely across states, it follows that the gender gap in fundraising for similar institutions will likewise be different. In spite of the fact that each state utilizes a legislature in a similar way to create policy, the elections employed to distribute those seats are not as comparable, nor is the composition of seat holders ultimately selected to participate in the legislature. The gender gap with regards to campaign fundraising is far from uniform, and addressing the state-level features, including professionalization, partisanship, and regionalization, provides a new alternative approach to understanding why greater gender disparities in funding exist in some states compared to others.

For the progression and development of the discipline, addressing this gap is critical: particularly as money becomes more influential in campaigns, state governments get more responsibility, and women and racial/ethnic minorities continually increase in their election races and victories. While substantial research exists with regards to national level differences of the gender gap in deciding to run, campaigning, and fundraising, this study addresses the critical lag in state level research. States have often been considered "laboratories" of democracy, created by and in turn creating special distinctions among them, through their population, location, economy, and citizen demographics. Just as states embody differences in their composition, they also represent differences in their governments, through the institutional and structural components that ultimately influence their politics. By analyzing the various effects of these differences on the gender gap in state legislature, we can better determine which features affect the relationship between candidate gender and fundraising and, furthermore, recognize the extent

to which these attributes matter. In understanding the impact of candidate identity in elections, then, the research questions raised in this study merit consideration.

On the larger scale, the value of this examination contributes to our more general understanding about our democratic system. As political scientists have long since determined, political participation in a democracy is not free. It embodies costs, both physical and otherwise, and innately discourages or altogether excludes certain groups of people from becoming fully engaged. The costly charge of participation through voting is easily multiplied repeatedly in campaigning and, just as with voting, not simply in a strict literal sense.

The reality that even today, the elected officials who represent their constituencies fail to resemble those constituencies lends to the notion that restrictive barriers to campaigning still exist. State variation embodies differences that enable an assessment of where women and racial/ethnic minorities are able to raise comparable amounts of money which allows us to consider what factors can be helpful or harmful to encouraging participation. The combined influence of these trends demonstrates a need for a better understanding of why the costs of campaigning are so high and how the relationship between campaign finance and gender and race/ethnicity may offer insight into this discrepancy. Without knowing what the data and hypotheses will yield, it would be premature to overestimate the contribution, but regardless of the individual findings, the gap in current research necessitates the value in addressing this issue.

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Notes:

¹ The dataset was comprised of verifiable facts about the candidates, their races, and their districts through the information available from the National Institute for Money in State Politics, the 2000 Census, and the individual or party websites. In situations where a detail about the candidate (i.e. gender) could not be confirmed, that notation was omitted in order to ensure accuracy. Because of these occasional omissions, not all of the 3,003 original observations (candidates) in the dataset were used; only those with complete information were utilized in the statistical regression.

² The leadership and quality variables were both coded as dichotomous variables. Leadership incorporated any high leadership position (i.e. Speaker) that the candidate held at the time of the campaign. The quality of the candidate was determined by whether or not the candidate had “run-and-won” a campaign before. Holding a political seat that was not popularly elected or running but losing a prior election did not count as quality, since those experiences are not the same as having successfully mounted a viable campaign for elected office.