

Gender and Political Representation

Session 8: Supply-Side Explanations

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What we did last week...



Plan for today

This week, we'll have our final session on the causes of inequalities. We'll focus on women themselves and discuss why they may not run for office.

Back to the first stage

In the last couple of weeks, we have approached the question of the female under-representation in politics based on one premise, our assumption was:

- women want to get into politics
- there are various barriers preventing them from becoming elected
 1. institutions (like electoral systems)
 2. parties (and their selection mechanisms)
 3. voters (and their implicit biases)

What if this assumption is wrong?

Back to the first stage

FIGURE 1 Candidate Emergence from the Pool of Prospective Candidates

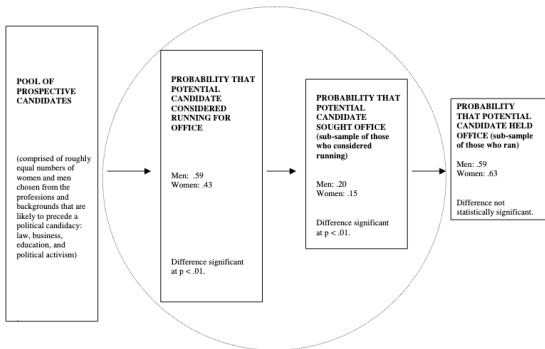
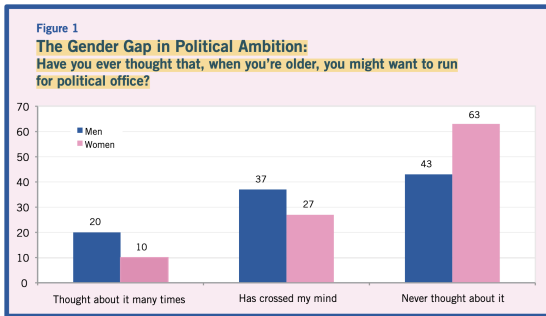


Figure: Gender and the decision to run for office (Fox and Lawless 2004)

A candidate pool full with men



Notes: Data are based on responses from 1,020 men and 1,097 women. Bars represent the percentage of men and women who fall into each category. The gender gap in each comparison is statistically significant at $p < .05$.

Figure: The gender gap in political ambition (Lawless and Fox 2013)

If women lack political ambition, how would a proper intervention mobilizing women look like?

A candidate pool full with men



Figure: The prior NZ Prime Minister on Motherhood and Politics [YouTube](#)

A candidate pool full with men

"It's difficult to balance it all. We are fed that myth that you can have it all, as a "Wonder Woman." . . . I found that you can't be the best mom and the best congressperson. You try to strike a balance. But you can't do 100 percent. . . . You keep the balls in the air, and you hope for the best. There is great guilt and angst as to what is the proper way." (Lawless and Fox 2010, p. 72)

Women are still often faced with a double bind.

A candidate pool full with men

FIGURE 5. Testing for the Double Bind: Do Respondents Prefer Politicians with Greater Family Responsibilities?

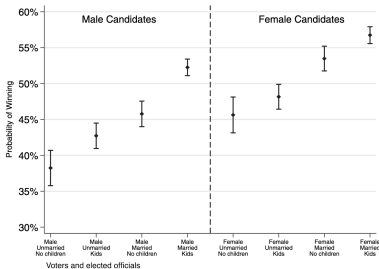


Figure: What voters want... (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018)

Research Question

- **Research Question:** Do structural resources influence women's decision to run for office?
- **Main Argument:**
- **Data and Method:**
- **Results:**
- **Implications:**

Argument

There are two types of political ambition

1. *nascent ambition*
2. *expressive ambition*

How do they differ? Which role do they play in the argument by Bernhard, Shames, and Teele (2021)?

Argument

- Women may consider running but this *nascent ambition* does not translate into the actual behavior
- Constraints are based on aspects of the household
 - Lack of resources (e.g. gender pay gap)
 - Too much responsibility in household (female breadwinner)
 - No one absorbing potential risks of income loss at household

What's the role of carework in their argument? How can this be integrated into the argument of female breadwinner?

Argument

- **Research Question:** Do structural resources influence women's decision to run for office?
- **Main Argument:** Women may consider running but their socio-economic situation prevents them from competing.
- **Data and Method:**
- **Results:**
- **Implications:**

Data and Method

What's the main challenge when studying who decides to run for office?

Data and Method

Oftentimes, we only have data on those people available who decided to run for office.

- they rely on survey from alumni of 'Emerge America' (EA), a Democratic recruitment programme
- three types of data
 - intake data (n=2,083)
 - screening data
 - alumnae survey (n=702)
 - dependent variable: decision to run for office
 - independent variables: income, breadwinning and household composition

Data and Method

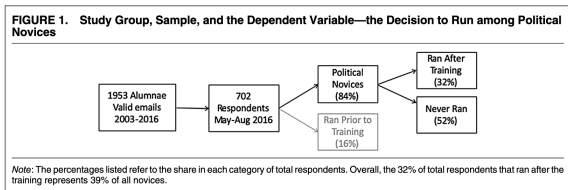


Figure: Sample characteristics of EA

What are potential problems coming with this data source?

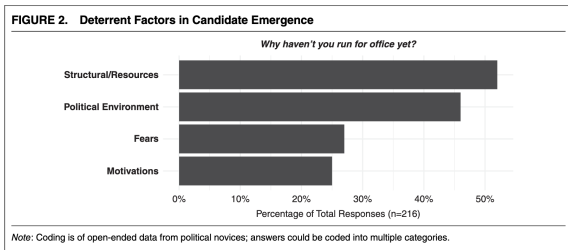
Data and Method

- only Democrats; motivations for Republicans may differ (think about last session)
- participants needed to pay a (substantial) fee of \$1,000 → is participation in EA actually already expressive ambition?
- we are missing another interesting control groups, which ones? **@Christof and Julius**

Data and Method

- **Research Question:** Do structural resources influence women's decision to run for office?
- **Main Argument:** Women may consider running but their socio-economic situation prevents them from competing.
- **Data and Method:** Mixed-methods study among alumni of Democratic Party's campaign training unit
- **Results:**
- **Implications:**

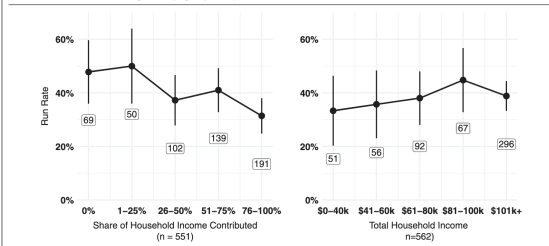
Findings



What do Bernhard, Shames, and Teele (2021) ask their respondents? What's the advantage of their approach?

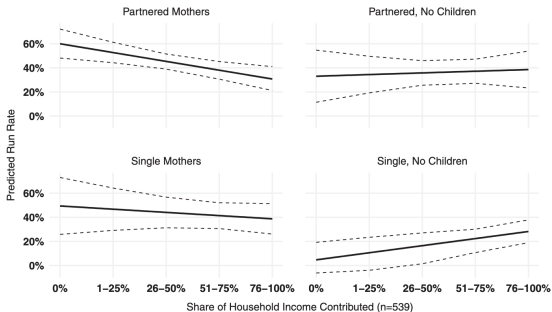
Findings

FIGURE 3. Among Political Novices, Breadwinners are Less Likely to Run (left panel), but Income is Uncorrelated with Emergence (right panel)



Which expectations are supported by their evidence?

Findings



How do motherhood and breadwinning relate to each other?

Findings

- **Research Question:** Do structural resources influence women's decision to run for office?
- **Main Argument:** Women may consider running but their socio-economic situation prevents them from competing.
- **Data and Method:** Mixed-methods study among alumni of Democratic Party's campaign training unit.
- **Results:** Particularly breadwinning reduces women's likelihood to run for office.
- **Implications:**

Implications and alternative explanations

Imagine you have new research funds at your disposal to advance the study by (Bernhard, Shames, and Teele 2021). What would you change?

- For 2-3 minutes, think about existing limitations on your own.
- For 8 minutes, share your ideas in two groups
 - Identify **one limitation** and prepare **one fix**.
- For 4 minutes, prepare for presentations

Implications and alternative explanations

Challenges you might consider:

1. Different measurement
2. Different identification strategy
3. Generalizability
4. Mechanism check
5. ...

Implications and alternative explanations

Questions: by Théa Should we rething training programs like Emerge?

by Thijmen and Théa: Should we rethink the relationship between women's economic independence and women's political equality?

Implications and alternative explanations

- **Research Question:** Do structural resources influence women's decision to run for office?
- **Main Argument:** Women may consider running but their socio-economic situation prevents them from competing.
- **Data and Method:** Mixed-methods study among alumni of Democratic Party's campaign training unit.
- **Results:** Particularly breadwinning reduces women's likelihood to run for office.
- **Implications:** Even if women are ambitious, socio-economic considerations may prevent them from running for office

Other factors

Which other factors may prevent women from running for office?

Other factors

One of the more powerful confounders in the study by Bernhard, Shames, and Teele (2021) was the 'political environment'

Other factors

Yan and Bernhard (2024) ran a field experiment in which they texted people (liberal organizations' supporters) campaign messages – randomly varying whether the sender was female or male (by name)

TABLE 1. Sample Responses and Response Rates by Category

| Category | Rates | Examples |
|-------------|------------------|---|
| Offensive | Study 1 = 3.76% | "No. Your fat." |
| | Study 2 = 6.59% | "fuck off marching won't do shit except waste time." |
| | Overall = 4.35% | "my name is [NAME] you slut. what kind of stripper name is Jessica anyway." |
| Silencing | Study 1 = 2.22% | "bitch stfu" |
| | Study 2 = 12.86% | "STOP TEXTING" |
| | Overall = 4.44% | "Lose my number lady" |
| Withdrawals | Study 1 = 27.79% | "No thank you. Please, quit texting" |
| | Study 2 = 36.46% | "please remove me from these messages" |
| | Overall = 29.60% | "Stop" |

Figure: Example responses (Yan and Bernhard 2024)

In general, female volunteers were more often harassed and people withdrew more often from the mailing list

What we've learned today...

- how the candidate pool is highly skewed towards male candidates
- that there's a difference between 'nascent' and 'expressive' ambition
- that socio-economic differences in the household may hold women back from running for office

To prepare for next week...





- next week, we'll start with an evaluation of potential institutional fixes to improve women's representation in politics
- Main reading:
 - **Kim JH** (2019) Direct Democracy and Women's Political Engagement. *American Journal of Political Science* **63** (3), 594–610. ISSN: 1540-5907. DOI: [10.1111/ajps.12420](https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12420)
- Complementary readings
 - **Betz T, Fortunato D, and O'Brien DZ** (2021) Women's Descriptive Representation and Gendered Import Tax Discrimination. *American Political Science Review* **115** (1), 307–315. ISSN: 0003-0554, 1537-5943. DOI: [10.1017/S0003055420000799](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000799)

To prepare for next week...

- **Clayton A** (2021) How Do Electoral Gender Quotas Affect Policy? *Annual Review of Political Science* **24** (1), 235–252.
DOI: [10.1146/annurev-polisci-041719-102019](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041719-102019)

Thank you for your attention!
Any further questions?




Literature

-  **Bernhard R, Shames S, and Teele DL** (2021) To Emerge? Breadwinning, Motherhood, and Women's Decisions to Run for Office. *American Political Science Review* **115** (2), 379–394.
-  **Betz T, Fortunato D, and O'brien DZ** (2021) Women's Descriptive Representation and Gendered Import Tax Discrimination. *American Political Science Review* **115** (1), 307–315.
-  **Clayton A** (2021) How Do Electoral Gender Quotas Affect Policy? *Annual Review of Political Science* **24** (1), 235–252.
-  **Fox RL and Lawless JL** (2004) Entering the Arena? Gender and the Decision to Run for Office. *American Journal of Political Science* **48** (2), 264–280.

Literature

-  **Kim JH** (2019) Direct Democracy and Women's Political Engagement. *American Journal of Political Science* **63** (3), 594–610.
-  **Lawless JL and Fox RL** (2010) *It Still Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office, Revised and Expanded Edition*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
-  **Lawless JL and Fox RL** (2013) *Girl Just Wanna Not Run*. Tech. rep. Washington, DC: Women & Politics Institute, 2013.
-  **Teele DL, Kalla J, and Rosenbluth F** (2018) The Ties That Double Bind: Social Roles and Women's Underrepresentation in Politics. *American Political Science Review* **112** (3), 525–541.

Literature

-  **Thomsen DM and King AS (2020)** Women's Representation and the Gendered Pipeline to Power. *American Political Science Review* **114** (4), 989–1000.
-  **Verge T and Astudillo J (2019)** The Gender Politics of Executive Candidate Selection and Reselection. *European Journal of Political Research* **58** (2), 720–740.
-  **Yan AN and Bernhard R (2024)** The Silenced Text: Field Experiments on Gendered Experiences of Political Participation. *American Political Science Review* **118** (1), 481–487.