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| Stretching Dollars: Examining the Value of Campaign Resources for Women of Color Running for the House of Representatives.  |
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The first woman elected to Congress was Jeannette Rankin in 1917.  She served in Congress before women were even granted universal suffrage.  Bankrolled by her rich brother, she campaigned in every corner of Montana’s vast wilderness to become one of Montana’s At-large representatives.  The next milestone in women’s congressional participation is Patsy Mink’s election in 1965, making her the first woman of color elected to Congress and the first Asian American.  Shirley Chisholm would come next as the first African American woman elected to office in 1969, followed by Barbara Vucanovich as the first Hispanic woman in 1983. Despite these groundbreaking milestones and the many women who have served in Congress since, there are still 5 states where a woman has never been elected to the House of Representatives.  Progress for women of color has always come slower than that of white women. In the case of Jeannette Rankin and Patsy Mink, women of color faced a 48 year lag on being elected to Congress. Jeannette Rankin had time to be elected twice before a woman of color won once. We still live in a time of milestones for women of color in government. Catherine Cortez Masto became the first Latina in the Senate in 2017. We still have not seen a Native American woman successfully make it into the House.  Women in the halls of power are still a rarity and women of color even more so.
 This paper is about the changing face of congressional candidates and how we account for what they need to run for office. Applying an intersectional framework to campaign finance research, the focus of this paper is to ask how far campaign dollars go for women of color when running for a seat in the House of Representatives.  Even though women may in some contexts raise as much as men when running for office (Burrell 1985; Uhlaner and Schlozman 1986) they still face gender biases in the electorate, judging everything from their wardrobe to the very sound of their voices.  To conquer these biases in the attempt to convince voters of their fitness for office, women spend more than their male counterparts. Intersectional theory tells us that some women also have to face and overcome racial biases when trying to run for office and that the effects of race and gender work tandemly in unique ways to oppress women of color (Crenshaw 1995).  In this context it is highly likely that minority women will get less out of each dollar raised because they face an exponential obstacle that white women do not. The purpose of this paper then, is to determine whether minority women get less value out of their campaign dollars than their white female peers. I use House races in the 2006 and 2008 election cycles to compare the resource value differentials of various types of campaign funds among different groups of women with my focus being outcomes for Latinas and African American women and how they differ from white women.  I chose to examine the late 2000s specifically for a few reasons. First, I wanted to examine a time when there were enough women of color but not so many as to seem common. I wanted there to still be a feeling of uniqueness to my slate of candidates. For women running today, particularly the 93 women currently listed as running for the House according to the Black Women Candidates database, the women in this analysis will be the anecdotes and experiences that future candidates look to in planning their campaigns.  Another aspect of this paper is to examine women of color outside of the literature on descriptive representation.  Finding out how women and minority women get elected is important, especially if we take seriously the conclusions of this literature that provides evidence that women in legislative offices positively affect the legislation done around them (Fraga et al 2005; Bratton et al 2007; Preuhs 2007). By looking at the possible differences in resource values among women of different racial and ethnic identifications, we can begin to unlock just how open electoral politics are becoming for different kinds of women. Determining whether women of color spend more for the same results as other candidates might help us focus future efforts to help elect minority women to office in more concrete ways.  No matter the differences found in this analysis we still only have twenty percent of Congress being women. This means there is a lot more to unpack about how women of all stripes are elected.

**Literature**

Our understanding of women in politics has evolved greatly in the last thirty years along with women’s ability to get elected to office. The many biases that women must overcome on their way to elected office make campaigning a veritable minefield for the ambitious women looking to join the political class. Female politicians are still a rarity in the United States, though not to the degree they used to be. We still see women of particular identities who are the first to be elected or appointed to certain political offices. Compounding societal ideas that women do not belong in politics (Dolan 1998, Fiber and Fox 2005) are women’s own lack of belief that they should be in politics. Women and other marginalized people are more likely to self-select out of running for office (Fox and Lawless 2005), not because they lack ambition but because they do not see themselves as qualified enough to run. Women face stereotypes about their political inclinations, with people seeing women as more likely to be liberal (King and Matland 1999; McDermott 1998), which is true even for women from the Republican Party. Our societal bias against female politicians is so strong that men are willing to cross party lines to not vote for a woman (Plutzer and Zipp 1996). The traits we seek from our leaders are not those we attribute to women and this distinction becomes more important the higher the office one seeks (Huddy and Terkildson 1993). Women are associated with qualities of caring and compassion, as opposed to the characteristics of knowledge and strength typically associated with men. When women try to counteract those stereotypes and project toughness and decisiveness it can backfire against them, as evidenced by the gendered criticisms of Hillary Clinton when she ran for office (Lawrence and Rose 2010). Hernson et al (2003) suggest that running as using womanhood as an identity, essentially leaning into the stereotypes, may be electorally beneficial for female candidates by tapping into the issues and concerns of female voters in a way that they perhaps are not addressed by male candidates. These biases that women face affect not just a candidate’s confidence in themselves but they constitute a large set of obstacles that women must overcome in the minds of voters when running for office and overcoming these obstacles can be quite expensive depending on the race. As we investigate how women overcome electoral biases, the research into how women run and fund their campaigns (Fredrick and Steb 2008; Gaddie and Bullock 1995) mostly deals with women as a homogenous group, not accounting for the intersectional ways race and ethnicity and the interplay of these identities with candidate gender might cause additional biases which might hinder fundraising.

Green (2003) highlights the some of the instances in which we already observe discrepancies in resource values.  Incumbents raise more money, which is compounded by the value of incumbency in terms of name recognition, election infrastructure, and connections to the party (Jacobson 2001; Green and Krasno 1988).  In the case of African American incumbents Arrington and Ingalls (1984) determined that African American incumbents were benefited by facing low quality challengers. A low-quality challenger can potentially mean less spending to hold on to a seat, allowing for African American incumbents to get a better return for their dollars than some of their peers.   Yet, Wilhite and Theilmann’s work (1986) on political action committee contributions to candidates of color finds that minority candidates struggle to secure support as opposed to white candidates. While minority candidates struggle to secure PAC money, they are also more dependent on it, as well as on donations from outside their campaign districts (Henry 1984).   While there are indications that African American incumbents get a bigger “bang for their buck” when it comes to holding on to their seats, it could also be a case of doing the best one can with limited resources and banking on poor challenger emergence.

 From Burrell (1985) to Herrick (1996), Green (1998, 2003), and Hogan (2007) we see that the status of campaign resources is definitely affected by the passage of time, most likely from the slow growth of women in office. Burrell finds that the value disparity of campaign resources benefitted female challengers in terms of spending, meanwhile Herrick later observes that the value of spending is greater for male challengers than it is for women. This analysis looks to see if this effect is still the same or if conditions have once again changed for female candidates, and specifically what effects the intersection of race and gender has on the value of campaign resources. Herrick makes the argument for a temporal effect which makes expanding this kind of analysis to include more recent elections that much more prudent and necessary and for us also to examine what in those varying eras is causing the changes we observe.  One possibility is that as time has passed women are entering politics in greater numbers. Statistics from the National Association of Latino Elected Officials show increasing numbers of Latinas entering elected office at local levels, hopefully providing a wealth of potential candidates for future work.  Literature on Latino participation shows that at least within Latino communities the political pipeline is expanding in terms of the experiences and paths people take to elected office, especially for Latina candidates (Montaya, Hardy-Fanta, Garcia 2000; Hardy-Fanta 1993).  As more people of color enter the arena of electoral politics, research must also pay attention to race and ethnicity and particularly how they interact and possibly upend the conclusions of established literature. A limitation encountered by this work and not accounted for in other works is the way men of color and the racial biases they face can have effects on the comparison group we use to evaluate how “well” women are doing.  Just as women have been entering politics in greater numbers so have non-white men. The questions of race buried in our male categories might prove another hindrance in our understanding of electoral politics and campaign resources particularly. Situating minority women amongst either the literature of racial or gender politics requires further exploration of racial identity in elite electoral politics, allowing for a stronger understanding of the intersectional position occupied by minority women.

The research into how women and particularly women of color behave once they are elected to legislative positions tells us that having women and minority women particularly can be highly beneficial to the legislative process (Bratton and Haynie 1999; Tate and Harsh 2005).  Women from marginalized identities have to become policy experts beyond the degree of normal legislators to be taken seriously (Smooth 2001) and in doing so are poised to be fierce advocates for their communities. In raising the number of women and especially minority women in the legislative chambers, we can increase how knowledgeable our legislators are and increase the representativeness of legislative chambers in relation to previously underserved groups

**Theory and Hypotheses**

As women can expect varying returns on their campaign dollars (Green 1998, 2003; Herrick 1996), so should women of color particularly experience a more substantial version of this effect.  At this point we are still learning about the ways in which women of color navigate electoral spaces from voter perceptions to fundraising. It is these perceptions that often lead women to self-select out of running for office (Fox and Lawless 2005) yet research shows that many of these perceptions are untrue.  At least in terms of campaign finance, in many instances women can raise as much as their male counterparts (Burrell 1985; Uhlaner and Schlozman 1986; Gaddie and Bullock 1995). Previous work shows that there exists disparity in resource values among candidate types (Jacobson 2001) as well as gender differences in resource values (Herrick 1996; Green 1998, 2003; Hogan 2007) and that campaign finance itself works differently for African American candidates (Smith 1988; Arrington and Ingalls 1984). An intersectional framework would then posit that that due to the interaction or intersection of race and gender, minority female candidates are differently situated than either their racial or gender peers and cannot be absorbed easily into either group or their respective research. Intersectional theory tells us that women of color face not only gender biases but also racial ones, or more precisely that race and gender multiply the effects of the other (Crenshaw 1995; Collins 2002). We cannot talk about only race or gender and expect to fully encompass the experiences of minority women especially in the context of elections. The use of intersectional theory to simultaneously expand our understanding of both women in politics and minorities in politics is as efficient as it is reflective of the real world.  Political science research particularly can benefit from an intersectional framework, which it has been slow to implement (Hancock 2007), as we examine the lives of the increasingly complex and complicated individuals’ active in the political world. While research that focuses on minority women might currently suffer from small sample sizes, Sanbonmatsu has noted (Sanbonmatsu 2006) that politics is slowly becoming more welcoming to women, therefore women of color cannot be far behind.  Bejarano (2013) contends that women of color are closing the gender gap with their ethnic and racial peers faster than white women, meaning that among African American and Latino elected officials, it is women making leaps and bounds electorally.

Taking intersectional theory into account for this analysis, we understand that gender biases faced by female candidates are compounded by racial biases when that female candidate is also a person of color.  This also raises the question of where in the literature women of color fit in. If the homogenous woman category should expect different returns on campaign resource investments (Herrick 1996; Hogan 2007; Green 1998, 2003), should women of color experience similar levels of differential returns?  Will the differences emerge not just between minority women and the comparison group of men but also between minority women and white women? Our understanding of minority campaign resources only covers how much candidates can raise not how far each dollar might go (Smith 1988, Henry 1984, Arrington and Ingalls 1984).  When it comes to the particular experiences that women of color might expect due to their racial/ethnic composition, we are quite in the dark. From this perspective, if minority women diverge from our understanding of what happens to “women” in these circumstances the possibility that the difference is the result of racial differences between female candidates is one to take seriously. Realizing that we only really understand one of those groups shows how much we have yet to do in this incredibly pertinent area. Of course, racial and gender biases can possibly be overcome through certain conditions no one is doomed from either being a minority or a woman running for office.  Previous political experience can ease concerns about a woman’s qualifications and ability to hold political office.  Running in a district where your party is favored can also help mitigate some negative effects. For this paper though, the focus is on various sources of campaign funds. As Robert Hogan (2007) states, spending is what affects votes and is therefore the most relevant aspect to study (Hogan 2007).  Starting with the takeaways from previous research there are four main hypotheses in this paper.

HI: Female candidates will have lower resource values than male candidates in the time period studied.
HII: Female candidates of color will have lower resources than either male candidates or white female candidates.
HIII: As minority demographics increase in a district, so will resource values.
HIV: More money from party committees will raise the value of other resources.

I test the first hypothesis, which is just the conclusion of the previous literature to see if the conclusions still hold for elections in the late 2000s.  Just as Herrick (1996) saw a change from Burrell’s previous efforts there is a chance that we might see a change from the previous literature as well.  The second hypothesis represents my first addition to the literature as I attempt to situate women of color in the discussion on resource values.  I believe that just as women must spend more to overcome gender biases, minority women will require an even greater amount of funds to get past both racialized and gendered critiques.  For the third hypothesis examines Smith’s (1988) conclusions in a different way. He assessed that minority districts are cheaper to win than white districts, particularly as an incumbent.  This paper considers that whether part of that dynamic is because money goes farther in garnering minority votes. For the last hypothesis, greater party spending is representative of a few things. First, the party investing in a campaign signals the party’s acceptance of the candidate and their perceived viability.  Parties do not like to throw money at potential losers. Second, when a party invests its resources in a campaign, the things that party money pays for no longer need to be allocated from the donations received from other sources. Getting party money frees up candidate money to do other things, which could help that money be spent in a more fruitful avenue.

**Data and Methods**

This analysis departs from previous literature in a few key ways. First in accounting for candidate identity I expand past looking at just gender. I add variables demarcating candidates as members of minorities groups, specifically being a black man or woman or a Latina or Latino. This is important in two ways. First research on female candidates tends to regard women as a similar, hegemonic group which obscures the differences created by race and ethnicity or other identity labels (Burrell 1985; Uhlaner and Schlozman 1986; Gaddie and Bullock 1995; Fox 2000; Crespin and Deitz 2009). Secondly, the number of women of color political actors has seen a marked increase as opposed to the growth of non-minority female political actors (Bejarano 2013). Therefore a focus on minority women is necessary for us to understand a quickly growing group of legislators. Another departure in this work is the different categories under observation. Whereas previous work looks at various kinds of campaign resources such as party strength along with aggregate spending, I chose to focus on economic resources, namely all forms of contributions. The reason for this is that contributions are a factor that candidates have a large stake in accumulating. District partisanship or party strength is a condition candidates are dealt not one of their own making though they are able to decide if the institutional factors of their districts are ones in which they want to run. Part of what motivated this work was a question about how much harder minority women might have to work to overcome electoral obstacles. By concentrating solely on economic factors like contributions and loans, I can examine how hard women of color have to work to raise a vital electoral resource. That being said, some of the control variables I add in contrast to previous work are the kinds of factors that again candidates have no control over. Specifically I add variables taking into account the racial/ethnic composition of an electoral district. Where previous work looks at whether a district was “urban” (Green 1998, 2003) from the perspective of media market costs, I specifically wanted to know how the level of black or Hispanic people in a district can have an impact on vote totals. Along with previous work, I control for age of the candidate as voters tend to have positive feelings for older, seemingly more experienced candidates. In following with voter concerns with experience, I include a control variable for previous political experience.

Following Herrick’s (1996) example I created different variables interacting status as a woman of color with various spending categories to measure their impact on vote share. Individual contributions, candidate loans, total receipts, total disbursements, party committee contributions, and other committee contributions are all analyzed in this paper. Total receipts and disbursements are my attempts to include and contrast Herrick’s analysis here. In that paper total spending is interacted with gender as a measure of the strength of spending for female candidates. Also in terms of previous experience, I expand the definition used by Herrick (1996). Instead of just using electoral experience I included serving on government committees working for political candidates and political appointment. Any kind of proximity to political life is useful fodder for the campaign trail so I thought it would be beneficial to open who we consider as having political experience, especial as women might have proximity to political office before they run for one themselves.

The data is compiled from a variety of sources. The contribution and spending data is from Federal Election Committee summary reports. Data on candidate identity came from looking up members through avenues like the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, Ballotopedia, and news articles along with any other source where the candidate identified themselves or they were identified by the source. District demographic data is from the American Communities Survey five year estimates. I run OLS regression estimates for each of the interacted spending and contribution categories. In looking at Herrick’s aggregate analysis (1996) versus Green’s district work (1998, 2003), where she uses the district level and matches opponents to account for race specific contexts that could vary spending this paper chose to follow Herrick's aggregate model for a few reasons. First as Herrick was taking an early look at the question of differential campaign resource values and here we take a first look at how the intersection of race and gender can affect resource values, going with the aggregate model felt appropriate. Secondly the comparison here is less so between women of color and their race specific opponents be they male or female but between minority women and white women. In providing evidence for an intra-gender difference, this analysis hopes to spur further research to take an intersectional approach to how we study women in elections.

**Results**

Table 1 contains basic descriptive numbers for the different groups focused on here. Between men and women we see women outpacing men in all areas of comparison except candidate loans. Women had higher total receipts compared to men $960,000 to $812,000 as well as substantially bigger individual contributions $603,333 to $427,000. The only category where men outdid women was in terms of candidate loans to their campaigns. In that area, men loaned their campaigns more than $26,000 more than women did. The disbursement category, where women spent over $160,000 dollars more than men, lightly indicated that some of the hypothesis are going in the right direction. Before controlling for anything women are spending substantially more money than men are and if we compare disbursements and total receipts, women as a category are going into some kind of debt to run their campaigns, black women and Latinas when broken out from the larger female category both show disbursements greater than receipts. White women come close, though they raised a little over a million dollars in total receipts, they spent most of what they had raised, leaving about twenty two thousand dollars whereas men had a thirty thousand dollar surplus. Though women as a group initially appear to be outraising men, when examining different racial/ethnic categories of women, differences start to appear that give initial evidence as to the drivers that make it seem as though women are doing as well or better than men. These numbers also give evidence towards Wilhite and Theilmann’s (1986) findings that political action committees support minorities at lower rates seen in the fact that African American women and Latinas both raise less money from non-party committees. Also, we should consider the fact that in looking across categories, committee money makes up a larger proportion of receipts for women of color than it does for white women.

Table 1. Means for Campaign Fund Categories

Table 2 contains the result of several multivariate regression analysis that follow Herrick’s aggregate model more closely. In it the various categories of campaign monies are compared as well as the measure for total receipts. Contributions and the other categories modeled together and total receipts was modeled apart. Both sets were then modeled separately to account for open seat races and incumbent/challenger races. The district characteristic variables are added here as well as dichotomous control variables accounting for status as either a minority woman or a white woman. Like Herrick’s original work (1996), I also included age and previous experience as control variables but the previous experience variable in this analysis is more expensive than the one originally used by Herrick. The results here indicate a negative relationship between the level of both PAC and party committee contributions which was not an expected result. In real numbers the effect is less than a percentage point decrease as contributions increase in either category. Previous experience remains incredibly significant resulting in a 6% increase in vote percentage for challengers and a 15% increase for those running in open seat races. Two of the variables added in this iteration also emerged as significant, being a woman of color and the percentage of people identifying as black in a district. Black population increases accounted for a .2% increase in vote percentage while being a woman of color accounted for a 4% increase for challengers and for open seat races women of color got a 6% bump in vote share. A six percent increase is significant and provides tentative evidence as to how exactly minority women are closing the gender gap faster than white women (Bejarano 2013). For open seat races age remains statistically significant as well. Total receipts while not significant for challengers is very significant for open seat candidates. In a field without incumbent advantages, raising as much as one can is still significant. In this model though, none of the campaign money categories are significant. Many like with PAC and party contributions actually have a negative coefficient indicating an inverse relationship between increased spending and vote percentages.

Table 2. Model with No Interactions



The interactions in table 3 indicate that when taking into account racialized gender identities when accounting for campaign spending there are differences between minority women and white women. The interactions between minority female status and the total amount of independent contributions is significant and negative though the substantive effect is smaller. The direction of the sign and the significance provide preliminary evidence that at least with some kinds of campaign funds, money does not work the same for some women as it does for others, particularly women of color. Again the coefficients for the interaction between PAC contributions and minority female status is significant and positive and this relationship holds for both challengers and open seat candidates. This further adds weight to Wilhite and Thielmann (1986) conclusions that African American candidates are more dependent on PAC money for success even as Table 1 shows they are less likely to receive it. As in previous models previous experience and the black demographics of a district are significant as is the age of the candidate.

Table 3. Interacted Model for Individual Categories of Campaign Funds

One variable that never became significant no matter the model is the percentage of Hispanic population in a district. It would stand to reason that perhaps for minority women, minority populations might be significant to their success in running for the House. The lack of significance might be due to the fact that not all Hispanic identified people are eligible voters. While not everyone in the African American identified group is a registered voter either, the potential difference in ratios between those eligible to vote and not is perhaps significant in this instance. Also insignificant were the interactions between total receipts and minority woman status and the interaction between total disbursements and minority female status found in tables 4 and 5 respectively. The lack of significance in receipts is understandable if so few of the separate category variable interactions are insignificant. In both models the woman of color control variable was significant and depending on challenger or open seat race could mean a twelve to 17 percent bump in vote percentage. The disbursements interaction is surprising at is a measure of spending as opposed to just raising money. The comparison between how much raised funds matter versus spending is the crux of women’s campaign finance literature. Answering whether women can raise as much money as men and how much they have to spend to win are key points in understanding how to get women into elected office. That neither of these variables were significant when interacted with status as a woman of color shows that there is more work to be done in understanding campaign finance for women. While none of the hypotheses were confirmed through statistical significance, coefficient signs point to the possibility that the relationships theorized are at least in the right direction, even if they are not yet confirmed statistically.

Table 4 Interacted Total Receipts Model 

Table 5 Interacted Disbursement Model



**Conclusion**

A limitation of this work may lie in using an aggregate model with the small sample of women and women of color which can prove problematic. Future projects will likely attempt to incorporate Green’s (1998, 2003) match-based comparisons as well as aggregate models to alleviate some of this issue. Also as more women enter the field of Congressional politics, the robustness of these studies will invariably improve for various methodological approaches. This study also raised the question of how we look at minority men when studying campaign finance. Where this study focused on minority women and comparisons to white women, the possibility exists that minority men look different in their fundraising than white men do. In grouping all racial and ethnic groups of men together as a comparison group, the risk exists of biasing our own work through a bad comparison group and a disservice is done to African American and Latinos men in not examining the ways they differ from their white male peers. Illuminating how all people of color experience the campaign finance system should be a matter of scholarly inquiry.

Like previous work, this study bears mixed results. While there was tentative evidence that status as a minority woman can affect the status of resource values for some categories of campaign dollars, significance did not extend to either total receipts or spending for women of color. Across the iterations of models, controlling for being a woman of color was significant and indicates that there are more questions to ask about how minority women exist in the world of campaign finance. This study provided some preliminary evidence towards the question of whether women of color conform to the findings of either the women in politics or the minority politics literature. PAC contributions being the only significant category when looking at the interaction variables would point to women of color fitting closer to the minority politics literature. No matter where minority women fit between both literatures, it remains that political science owes these women greater attention and further research.

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