The Party's Primary Preferences: Race, Gender, and Party Support of Congressional Primary Candidates*

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Abstract

Party support has a strong influence on candidate success in the primary. What remains unexplored is whether party actions during the primary are biased along racial and gender lines. Using candidate demographic data at the congressional level and measures of party support for primary candidates, we test whether parties discriminate against women and minority candidates in congressional primaries and also whether parties are strategic in their support of minority candidates in certain primaries. Our findings show parties are not biased against minority candidates and also that white women candidates receive more support from the Democratic party than do other types of candidates. Our findings also suggest that parties do not appear to strategically support minority candidates in districts with larger populations of minorities. Lastly, we also find no significant differences in the effects of party support on the likelihood of success in the primary by candidate race or gender.

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(There) clearly needs to be more support of candidates from diverse backgrounds. The more we can have the national party and the decision makers understand that this is really the future of our country, then we will be moving in the direction we need."
—Former Congressman Steven Horsford (D-NV)(Herndon, 2018)

Introduction

The American electorate has become increasingly diverse, with more women and minorities participating politically. This diversification of the population necessitates better representation. Race and gender representation establishes trust between these groups and government and improves the quality of representation for minorities and women (Banducci, Donovan and Karp, 2004; Grose, 2011; Mansbridge, 1999). Yet, the electoral representation of minority groups and women lags behind the proportions of minorities and women within the US population. Women make up only roughly 20% of Congress, despite representing a larger share of the electorate than men. Additionally, 78% of Congress is non-Hispanic white, compared with only 62% of the country.

Part of the key to closing that representation gap may be party actions. Recent work has argued that parties are best conceptualized as an extended network of policy demanders whose actions are critical to the electoral prospects of candidates (Bawn et al., 2012; Cohen et al., 2008; Hassell, 2018b; Koger, Masket and Noel, 2009; Masket, 2009). This work has shown that parties and the network surrounding the formal party organization play a substantive role in clearing the field and helping candidates win the nomination. Primaries are crucial in the pathway to elected office and parties help candidates at that step by providing electoral resources such as campaign funds, campaign staff, campaign information, and access to media that are harder to acquire outside of the party network (Dominguez, 2011; Hassell, 2016, 2018b; Masket, 2009; Ocampo, 2018).

Despite the importance of party support on candidate success, there has been little research on the impact of candidate race and gender on parties' support in the primary.[1]

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[1] As we note in more detail later, there is also disagreement about how much parties support underrepresented candidates in the general election (Fraga and Hassell, 2018;

While we know party support is critical for success in congressional primaries (Dominguez, 2011; Hassell, 2018b; Ocampo, 2018), we know little about how party support varies across candidate race and gender and might, subsequently, contribute to the underrepresentation of these groups in elected office.

Given the importance of party support in the success of primary candidates and the paucity of research examining party support of candidates from underrepresented groups during this stage, in this paper, we examine the relationship between candidate race and gender and party support in congressional primary elections. Using data on the race and gender of all primary candidates between 2010 and 2014 and a measure of party support that quantifies the strength of the relationship between party congressional campaign committees and candidates, we evaluate how parties treat underrepresented candidates. In this paper, we test whether parties promote or discriminate against minority and women candidates, and also whether parties are strategic in which types of candidates they support in different types of districts. We also test whether minority and women primary candidates receive the same electoral benefits that come from party support.

We find that, during the primary election, race and gender by themselves do not have a negative effect on the levels of support from the party network that is crucial to success in the primary. Our findings suggest that party support during the primary election is not a hindrance to underrepresented candidates. While our results do not speak to other steps along the process to political office, our findings show parties are not discriminating against minorities and women at the primary election stage. In contrast, we find that Democratic Party elites are more supportive of women candidates. However, we find that these effects are limited to white women. Minority women do not receive the same bump in party support from Democratic Party elites.

Moreover, we also find that the support of the party network does not work differently for different types of candidates. Support from the party has the same positive impact on the likelihood of a candidate winning the primary, regardless of race and gender.

Theilmann and Wilhite, 1986)

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In summary, our results show no discriminating effects against minority and women candidates by parties in the primary stage of the pathway to elected office. However, outside of Democratic support for white women, party elites and policy demanders within the parties are not leading efforts to mitigate the problem of underrepresentation.

Party Support and Candidate Success

Traditionally, a candidate's decision to run for office and subsequent success has been considered largely candidate-driven (Jacobson and Kernell, 1981). However, recent work has highlighted the key role of parties in facilitating candidate success in congressional primary elections (Dominguez, 2011; Hassell, 2018b; Ocampo, 2018).[2] This work has conceptualized parties as a network of policy demanders (Bawn et al., 2012; Koger, Masket and Noel, 2009) who coordinate together to achieve policy goals through control of party nominations (Bawn et al., 2012; Cohen et al., 2008; Dominguez, 2011; Hassell, 2018b; Herrnson, 2009).

Although this party network involves a large number of individuals and groups outside the formal party organization, the parties' congressional Hill Committees (the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) for Democrats and the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) for Republicans), are the center of this coordinated effort to direct party support to particular favored candidates (Hassell, 2018b; Herrnson, 1988, 2009; Koger, Masket and Noel, 2009; Kolodny and Dwyre, 2018). Although the formal party organizations do not have the financial clout they once did, they continue to coordinate extended party network activity (Kolodny and Dwyre, 2018).[3]

In congressional primaries, support from the party network has a strong effect on

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[2]Additional work has found similar effects of party support in primary races for Senate (Hassell, 2016), Governor (Masket, 2011), state legislature (Masket, 2009), and in congressional general elections (La Raja and Schaffner, 2015).

[3]See Herrnson (1988), Kolodny (1998), and Menfee-Libey (2000) for details on the development of party Hill Committees as bundlers and coordinators of party activity in the 1970s and 1980s

increasing future candidate fundraising and on subsequent election success in the primary (Dominguez, 2011; Hassell, 2018b). Party support provides access to experienced and competent staff and access to media connections that allow the candidate to better communicate the campaign's message (Grossmann and Dominguez, 2009; Hassell, 2018b; Masket, 2011; Nyhan and Montgomery, 2015). Access to this network of resources and donors is critical to the electoral success of challengers and non-incumbents (Desmarais, Raja and Kowal, 2014; Dominguez, 2011; Hassell, 2018b).

Who Do Parties Support in the Primary?

Although we know party support matters for primary success, we have little knowledge about how race and gender influence access to that support during the nomination process. Instead of focusing on race and gender, research on variations in party support for certain types of candidates during primary elections has focused primarily on candidate ideology. The focus on ideology can be attributed to debates about the underlying motivations that parties have for supporting one candidate over another. One line of thought is that parties are pragmatic, supporting more moderate candidates who have better general election chances (La Raja and Schaffner, 2015). Party elites often describe their support of one candidate over another in pragmatic terms (Hassell, 2018b).[4] Recent scholarship, however, has suggested that parties are not pragmatic in their support of candidates in the primary and are better thought of as a network of policy demanding groups who tend to coordinate around candidates who are salient within their network in part because of the need to support a candidate who will champion their policy goals and in part because of the ease of coordination on a well-known entity within the network (Bawn et al., 2012; Hassell, 2018a; Koger, Masket and Noel, 2009; Masket, 2009).

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[4]Hassell (2018a) notes that party elites also often provide contradictory explanations for why parties support particular candidates. In interviews conducted with party elites, he notes both pragmatic motivations (finding a candidate who can win) and an insular search within the party network (finding known quantities who will facilitate collective party action) as reasons for supporting particular candidates over others.

What party coordination on these types of candidates means for the support of minority and women candidates provided by political parties in primary elections, however, is unclear. Minorities and women are not central figures in the party network. Party leadership in both parties remains predominately white and male. Moreover, both women and minorities may be perceived as less electable (Doherty, Dowling and Miller, 2019; Gimenez et al., 2018) However, recent work has highlighted efforts to make groups seeking better representation of women and minorities more central within the party (Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman, 2018; Herndon, 2018; Sanbonmatsu, 2015).

Party Support for Racial and Ethnic Minorities

While the primary explanations for minority underrepresentation has been centered on the voting behavior of whites and minority groups (Abrajano and Alvarez, 2010; Reeves, 1997; Terkildsen, 1993; Williams, 1990; Wong et al., 2011), we contend that this literature is missing an examination of a critical component to the success of a political candidacy: party support. As noted above, given the role parties play in getting candidates through the nomination process and into elected office, we seek to understand whether party discrimination at this point in the path to elected office also hinders the progress of minority candidates.[5]

Historically, both parties have had fraught relations with racial minorities in their coalitions (Frymer, 2010) and have struggled to attract and support more minority candidates as a means to win minority votes (Republican National Committee, 2013; Wright Rigueur, 2015). Beginning in the 1960s and 70s, and most recently in their postmortem on the 2012 election, Republican Party leadership has repeatedly called for stronger support of minority candidates within the party as a way to appeal to minority

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[5]Other scholars have documented the biases of party elites earlier in the recruitment process (Doherty, Dowling and Miller, 2019; Fox and Lawless, 2010), but with the exception of Ocampo's (2018) work that looks at the role of party support in majority-minority districts on the success of minority candidates in primaries in those districts, we are unaware of any work looking at party support of minorities or women in primary elections.

voters (Republican National Committee, 2013; Wright Rigueur, 2015).[6] Skeptics, however, have questioned the sincerity of these appeals (McCoy, 2016).

Likewise, while Democrats have traditionally enjoyed more support from minority voters, some have questioned Democratic Party support for minority candidates. Leading up to the 2018 midterm elections, leaders in minority communities complained about the lack of support for minority candidates from Democratic leaders, arguing that "the party only supports nonwhite candidates in so-called 'minority districts,' where nonwhite voters outnumber their white counterparts" (Herndon, 2018, A1). Moreover, minority candidates success or struggles in majority Latino congressional districts can be attributed to support (or lack thereof) from the party (Ocampo, 2018) and Latino candidates receive fewer party endorsements and the endorsements and support they do receive comes from sources that are less well connected to the national party (Ocampo and Ray, 2019). Only in recent years have groups emerged within the Democratic Party that are focused on minority representation (Herndon, 2018).

Recent research has also suggested that local leaders from both parties do not view minority candidates as electorally viable as white candidates (although that may be mitigated in certain minority-majority districts) (Doherty, Dowling and Miller, 2019). Perceived general election viability is a critical component of party leaders' rationale for support of a congressional candidate in the primary (Hassell, 2018a).

Lastly, the limited research on party support of minorities in general elections has drawn differing conclusions. Scholarship on party support of minority candidates has found both that parties discriminate against minority candidates (Theilmann and Wilhite, 1986) and also that parties (specifically the Republican Party) are more supportive of minority candidates relative to their white counterparts (Fraga and Hassell, 2018). In

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[6]In 1977, RNC Chair Bill Brock hired a consulting firm and charged them to recruit more minority candidates, saying "[The party needs to increase] the recruitment of Black candidates to seek public office at all levels as Republicans." (Wright Rigueur, 2015, 267). The RNC's post-mortem of the 2012 presidential election also highlighted the support of minority candidates, stating explicitly that "[the GOP] must recruit more candidates who come from minority communities" (Republican National Committee, 2013, 8).

short, there is no research that analyzes party support of minorities during the primary election process, and research about party support of minority candidates during the general election is inconsistent in its findings. Moreover, this previous research has also not considered how parties might be strategic in where they are willing to support minority candidates.

Party Support for Women

Since attaining voting rights almost 100 years ago, the fight for women's political representation, both descriptive and substantive, has become a major political issue. Research on the relationship between party institutions and women's representation has generally found that party elites show a bias in recruiting men as candidates over women (Crowder-Meyer (2013); Fox and Lawless (2010); Niven (2006) but see Doherty, Dowling and Miller (2019)), and that potential women candidates perceive party institutions as unsupportive of their potential as candidates, which may contribute to general difficulty in recruiting women candidates (Butler and Preece, 2016). In other words, what parties do matters when it comes to providing a welcoming atmosphere for potential women candidates, and recruiting and running them in turn.

This evidence suggests that parties may be unsupportive of women candidates. Women overall are less likely to be recruited to run for political office by party elites (Fox and Lawless, 2010; Niven, 2006). While women (holding candidate backgrounds constant) are not viewed as a less electable (Doherty, Dowling and Miller, 2019), candidates with feminine traits are viewed by party elites as having lower electoral chances (Gimenez et al., 2018).

However, there are also reasons to believe that parties may be supportive of women. In addition to advocating for more support of minority candidates, the GOP's 2012 postmortem also encouraged additional support of women candidates. However, as the partisan gender gap in voting has widened, with more women voting for Democrats and men supporting Republicans, a marked difference in the gender composition of the candi-

dates of both parties has also emerged, with the Democratic Party fielding more women candidates and electing more women office holders than the Republican Party (Thomsen, 2015). Women running in Democratic primaries outraise men but the same is not true for women running in Republican primaries (Kitchens and Swers, 2016). Moreover, looking at the general election, compared to men, Democratic white women appear to receive more support from Democratic party elites (Fraga and Hassell, 2018).[7]

Additionally, some research on the relationship between the national political parties and women candidates suggests a strong role of policy demanders within the party in determining support for candidates. Specifically, groups committed to female representation have become extremely influential within the Democratic Party (Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman, 2018). This is reflected in major women-oriented political interest groups who are integral components of the extended network of the Democratic Party, such as Emily's List and the National Organization for Women (NOW).

This survey work has also indicated that liberal donors are more likely to recognize the work of women's groups within the party and are much more likely to report that gender issues motivate their decisions to donate to specific candidates than are conservative donors (Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman, 2018).[8] These policy demanders help recruit, train, and fund women candidates within the Democratic Party, providing access to the financial and other electoral resources available within the party networks (Crespin and Deitz, 2010; Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman, 2018; Hannagan, Pimlott and Littvay, 2010;

[7]Along with the survey evidence detailed below, there is also some evidence that Democratic Party support for white women in the primary might be higher. In congressional primaries, party support predicts future candidate fundraising (Hassell, 2018b), and Democratic women consistently raise more money in the primary election period than their counterparts (Kitchens and Swers, 2016). However, it is difficult to tell whether this effect is a result of party support as a number of aspects help increase campaign fundraising and campaign donors who also donate to party organizations make up only a small fraction of a primary candidate's fundraising.

[8]Given the impact of social desirability and social norms on survey responses (Berinsky, 1999, 2004) and the norms of gender and racial equality within Democratic Party circles, it is important to confirm that behavior reported from survey research is consistent with the observed behavior of party elites during the primary.

Pimlott, 2010).

Within the Republican Party, on the other hand, comparable groups have been unable to achieve the same level of recognition and integration into the Republican Party network (Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman, 2018). These findings suggest that both parties should behave differently when it comes to the candidates they promote —women's representation policy demanders have become a core part of the Democratic Party political structure, while similar groups are less influential in the Republican Party. These motivations can help us understand and predict differences between the actions of the two major parties in support of women candidates in primary elections.

Party Support and Under Represented Candidates

What does this previous research suggest about how political parties might consider descriptive issues when determining which candidates to support? On one hand, some evidence suggests support for a theory that parties may discriminate by gender and race, whether intentional or non-intentional. Women and minorities are largely outside the "white old boys" club of the party elite decision makers and may not be the salient candidate on which party elites choose to coordinate (Hassell, 2018a). Indeed, research has shown that Latino candidates are less connected to national party networks and more reliant on local networks of support isolated from the party (Ocampo and Ray, 2019).

Moreover, race and gender could also be seen by party leaders as impediments to a candidate's fortunes, especially for minorities facing potentially hostile white electorates (Hajnal, 2007; Sigelman et al., 1995; Terkildsen, 1993). Parties may want to appeal to the median white voter by supporting white candidates over potentially racially polarizing minority ones (Visalvanich, 2016).

Likewise, while party elites have expressed desires to add gender diversity to their candidate slate, parties have generally recruited more men than women (Crowder-Meyer, 2013; Fox and Lawless, 2010) and are more likely to discourage women candidates from

running (Niven, 2006). This could be the result of several factors, including primarily male party elites basing their recruitment strategies on "ideal" candidate characteristics that are in reality based on their own characteristics (Hassell, 2018*a*), but also the reality of perceptions that party institutions are unwelcoming of women candidates (Butler and Preece, 2016). Moreover, while party chairs do not view women candidates (while holding gendered traits constant) as less electorally viable (Doherty, Dowling and Miller, 2019), feminine priorities and backgrounds do have perceived negative electoral consequences among party elites (Gimenez et al., 2018).

> *Parties Discriminate Hypothesis - Parties will provide less support for minority candidates and for women candidates when compared to white and male candidates.*

On the other hand, parties have an incentive to promote racial and gender diversity among their ranks. Parties may have a pragmatic incentive to promote certain types of candidates in order to improve their party brand. In the past decades, GOP leadership has routinely stated interests in supporting and recruiting women candidates and candidates from minority backgrounds (Republican National Committee, 2013; Wright Rigueur, 2015).

Parties can use increased racial diversity of candidates to appeal to minority voters who value descriptive representation (Abrajano and Alvarez, 2010; Dawson, 1994; Wong et al., 2011), or as a way to win over racially liberal white voters who are receptive to minority candidacies (Fraga and Leal, 2004). In general elections, while Democratic party elites have neither promoted nor discriminated against minority candidates, minority GOP general election candidates receive higher levels of support from party elites than white candidates (Fraga and Hassell, 2018). Some work suggests racially conservative Republicans may be more supportive of minority candidates who buck stereotypical expectations about black behavior (Karpowitz et al., 2017; Visalvanich, 2016).

Likewise, parties may also have pragmatic incentives to promote women candidates. While voter turnout by gender has been found to be roughly equivalent, women voters tend to favor women candidates (Plutzer and Zipp, 1996).

If party actions are driven by the demands of policy oriented groups, we might also expect groups focused on women's representation to increase party support for women candidates, especially when those groups are better integrated into the extended party network (Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman, 2018).

> *Parties Promote Hypothesis - Parties could provide more support for minority candidates and for women candidates when compared to white and male candidates.*

A third possibility is that while parties might support white women, that support might not extend to minority women. While much work has been done on how the public and party institutions treat women candidates or minority candidates, there has been little work that has examined the intersection of race and gender in primary elections. As a result, how minority women might be treated differently by political parties has remained under-theorized.

Some work has hypothesized that the negative effects of both race and gender are combined to disadvantage minority candidates (Githens and Prestage, 1977). Descriptive work examining where minority women are seeking office at the state legislative level shows that while minority women are often successful when they run for office, far fewer actually seek office (Shah, Scott and Juenke, 2018), and that minority women do not feel supported by party networks (Sanbonmatsu, 2015). Thus, another plausible hypothesis is that minority women may be treated differently than white women by party institutions.

> *Parties Promote Selectively Hypothesis - Gender will have a positive effect on the access to party support for white women, but not for minority women.*

A fourth possibility is that parties may seek to promote racial minorities and women strategically within their ranks by aiming to promote candidates best able to win specific districts (Herrnson, 2009). Thus, it is possible that parties treat descriptive representation instrumentally and rationally. As a result, another hypothesis that is that parties, perhaps due to their efforts to maximize the number of seats they hold (Aldrich, 1995; Herrnson, 1988), will support minority candidates in certain districts. Because descriptive representation remains a major concern of minority groups (Banducci, Donovan and

Karp, 2004; Grose, 2011; Mansbridge, 1999), and districts with high proportions of ethnic minorities are more likely to elect co-ethnic representatives (Hajnal, 2007), parties may attempt to promote candidates who match the characteristics of the district with the hope that those candidates will be able to appeal to racial groups of voters in the district. Parties may also, in turn, deny resources and access to minority candidates where they think candidate race my hinder the party's chances of winning the general election, likely in majority white districts.

> *Conditional Party Support Hypothesis - Parties will choose to promote minority candidates strategically in order to maximize the probability of winning. Parties will coordinate around a minority candidate when the district has a substantial minority population.*

Finally, we must recognize the possibility that different parties may have different incentives. The presence of policy demanders within the Democratic Party who advocate for more women's representation may result in higher support for women candidates (Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman, 2018; Kitchens and Swers, 2016). Similarly, the Democratic Party has also relied on racial minorities as a core component of their coalition. Black voters have been a bedrock of the Democratic coalition since the Civil Rights era (Hajnal and Lee, 2011), and Democrats have since incorporated Hispanic, Latino, and Asian voters (Abrajano and Alvarez, 2010; Wong et al., 2011). The culture of both parties are asymmetric —with the Democrats increasingly large coalition of different interest groups, including different racial minority groups, women's interest groups, and LGBT voters, while Republicans have become resembled the conservative ideological movement that has been increasingly demographically white (Grossman and Hopkins, 2016).[9] As such it might be reasonable to expect that Democrats and Republicans may be responsive to different incentives to promote women and minorities.

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[9]At the same time, minority Democrats have criticized the party for not being more supportive of minority candidates (Herndon, 2018), while Republican party elites have consistently emphasized the need to reach out and support minority candidates (Wright Rigueur, 2015; Republican National Committee, 2013). There is even some research that has found that Republicans are more supportive of minority candidates in the general election (Fraga and Hassell, 2018).

The Party Differential Hypothesis - Democratic Party donor networks will be more supportive of minority and women candidates when compared to the Republican Party.

Data

Given the range of different, yet all entirely plausible, hypotheses, laid out in the previous section, we rely on data about congressional candidates who ran in a Democratic or Republican primary election between 2010 and 2014 and a measure of party support that allows us to identify party preferred candidates in those primary election cycles and to examine how candidate race and ethnicity affects the level of support candidates receive from parties during the primary election.

Table 1 shows the racial makeup for major party primary candidate running in primary elections for U.S. Congress between 2010 and 2014 Congressional primary elections. The racial background of each candidate was coded using information from candidate websites and other online information sources and was verified using names, pictures, and biographical information. While many minority candidates ran in Democratic primaries, a significant number of minority candidates also ran in Republican primaries. As shown in Table 1, 329 black candidates, 150 Latino candidates, and 76 Asian candidates ran in Democratic primaries between 2010 and 2014. Republicans had 113 black candidates,105 Latino candidates, and 42 Asian candidates that ran in Republican primaries over the same time period.[10] There is enough diversity in the racial makeup of candidates in both parties to make cross-racial comparisons. In addition to candidate race, we also gathered information on candidate gender (shown also in Table 1) and whether the candidate held prior elected office.

[Table 1 about here]

Prior studies have attempted to operationalize party support by counting share of endorsements, but these measures have proven limited in their comparability across districts

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[10]South Asian candidates were coded as "Asian".

(Dominguez, 2011; Ocampo, 2018). In order to generate a measure of party support, we use a measure that counts the number of donors who donated money to both the candidate and the party's Congressional Campaign Committee (the DCCC for Democrats and the NRCC for Republicans). This measure captures the role of party organizations as located at the center of, and as coordinators of, the larger party network (see Hassell (2016) for more details on this measure and its validity in measuring party support during the primary election). Although media accounts ocassionally report party support of one candidate in a primary over another, most of what parties do in support of a candidate is clandestine and away from the public spotlight in order to retain a credible ability to deny that they have been involved in any process that might be labeled king-making.[11]

The number of shared donors between a candidate and the national party Hill Committees quantifies qualitative accounts of the party organization at the center of a coordinated effort to connect preferred candidates with influential donors (Hassell, 2016, 2018b; Herrnson, 1988; Kolodny and Dwyre, 2018). As they act behind the scenes, parties coordinate resources from influential donors to their preferred candidates (Herrnson, 2009; Kolodny and Dwyre, 2018).

This responsibility began in the 1980s as party organizations started raising more money than they could legally spend or transfer to candidates. As a result, the party Hill Committees began bundling money to candidates as a solution to that problem (Herrnson, 1988; Kolodny, 1998). Bundling is when organizations gather a large number of donations on behalf of another candidate, "bundles" these checks together, and then gives them to the candidate. Moreover, even if not involved in the formal bundling process, major party donors are acutely aware of the preferences of the national party when making their donations (Hassell, 2016; Herrnson, 1988). Thus, the measure of shared donors is a strong indicator of party support in the primary (Hassell, 2016).[12] While explicitly measuring the

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[11]Previous research has shown that this measure strongly matches journalistic accounts of party support for a particular candidate in the primary (Hassell, 2016, 2018b).

[12]Party support has a strong effect on the likelihood a candidate will drop out of the race and on the liklihood that a candidate will win the nomination (Hassell, 2018b).

number of shared donors with the party's Hill Committee, this measure is also reflective of other support in the form of campaign staff and other necessary electoral resources that flows between the party and the party's preferred candidate (Hassell, 2018*b*).

Most importantly, this measure incorporates a simple and broadly applicable measure of party support to a diverse array of candidates, thus allowing us to examine the relationship parties have with minority and women candidates running in the party's primary election across a vast number of congressional districts. While other research has looked at the affinity of male and female donors to give to candidates of a certain gender (Barber, Butler and Preece, 2016; Thomsen and Swers, 2017), here we examine explicitly the ability of under represented candidates to gain access to party support which is crucial to candidate in winning the nomination.

Findings

We start our analysis by examining at the average levels of party support as measured by donor relationship with the party's campaign committee for minority and women candidates, split by party. Table 2 shows the distribution of party support broken down by party and the race and gender of the candidate.

We find that white women receive significantly more support than other candidate types. Consistent with one set of expectations, however, this higher level of support appears to be primarily driven by Democratic support of white women. Whereas white women receive more than twice the support of the average white man from the Democratic party, there is no substantive difference in the support for white women candidates among Republican Party elites. These results also suggest that minority women receive significantly less support from Republicans than other candidates.

[Table 2 about here]

Party Support of Women and Minorities

These results do not take into account other contextual factors that may influence party support, such as incumbency, whether the candidate held previous office, and district demographics. Relying on these bivariate differences in means disregards variations in where different candidates choose to run and their previous electoral experience, both of which should influence party support (Hassell, 2018b).[13] Including other contextual factors in our model also allows us to test the conditional party support hypothesis by looking at the interaction between minority status and the proportion of the district that non-white.

Table 3 reports the results of a model with fixed-effects at the primary race level. Because of differences in party support across primary races, we use a fixed-effects model. This allows us to account for all the contextual factors (most notably both congressional district competitiveness and also the different financial costs associated with running in different congressional districts) that might also impact party support in a particular congressional primary. The remaining effects displayed are the direct result of the candidate

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[13]Because of the vast number of congressional primaries each year, many of which take place in districts that are safe for one party or another, parties may not be able to evaluate each candidate running in each primary individually. As such, in many cases, they may rely on heuristics, such as previous candidate experience, to decide which candidate to support. Previous research has found that party support and measures of candidate viability move together in House primaries. In these contests, both general support of the candidate and support from the party are interdependent, much of which is driven by candidate quality. When there are clear differences in candidate quality, parties have a strong incentive to support the clearly better candidate. However, in competitive districts where there is no clear difference in the quality of the candidates running in the primary, party support is not dependent on candidate quality nor on perceived candidate viability. In these races, parties are not just rallying around an already viable candidate but rather are choosing candidates based on other factors (Hassell, 2018b). It might be these races where we might expect the biggest differences in party support by race and gender because candidate quality, which might otherwise drive party support, is equal between candidates. Moreover, it is these primary races where party efforts are largely focused because of the perceived potential for an expensive and divisive primary that would potentially harm the eventual nominee and the competitive nature of the congressional district. However, when we look at those races specifically (as we do in the online appendix in Table ??), we find no significant differences from the results we present here.

characteristics of those candidates running in the primary.

We also ran models with just candidates running in primaries without incumbents and models with just incumbents because we might expect incumbents, who are more likely to be white men, to have more access to party support (**?**Kolodny, 1998). These models, which are available in Table **??** in the online appendix, show no significant or substantive variation from the results presented here.

[Table 3 about here]

As shown in Table 3, we find no evidence of party discrimination or support of minority candidates in the primary. In contrast to findings from previous decades (Theilmann and Wilhite, 1986), we do not find that parties discriminate against minority candidates. White candidates do not receive substantially or significantly more support from parties than do their minority counterparts. We also find no differences in party support for minority candidates by party. Both Republicans and Democrats do not provide significantly more or less support to minority candidates.[14]

We also examined the possibility that that minority candidates are only discriminated against when facing opponents who are white or that women are only discriminated

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[14]Other work has found that minority candidates receive more support from individuals and groups that are outside the party network (Ocampo and Ray, 2019, 2017). This work, however, has focused almost entirely on endorsements and other publicized support. However, one possibility is that minority candidates are receiving party support, but that support is disproportionately smaller relative to their overall support. In this case, it might be that minority candidates receive equal support from the party as measured by the number of shared donors, but that in order to receive that support minority candidates are raising substantially more money from other sources. In Table **??** in the online appendix, we examine whether race and gender influence the amount of support from party connected donors that a candidate receives relative to the total number of donors who have donated to their campaign. Using this alternative measure, we find no substantive differences from the findings that are reported here although the effect for white women Democratic candidates does not quite reach statistical significance ($p<0.11$). If anything, this only reinforces the idea that party support of women candidates appears to be driven by the support of groups such as Emily's List that are well-connected to the party network whose support connects a candidate both to donors inside the party network while also simultaneously boosting their candidacy among donors not well-connected to the party.

against when facing opponents who are men. While the fixed effects model takes the primary competition into account, it does not identify individual effects for those components. We choose to use fixed effects in the models in the text because Hausman-style tests reveal significant bias in the coefficients in random effects models with this data (Kennedy, 2008). In the online appendix in Table **??** we use a random effects model, despite the biases that such a model introduces to the coefficient estimates, to get a sense of the effects of support for minority and women candidates in the context of the race and gender of their opponents. We find no significant or substantive differences from what is reported here in the text.

We also investigate the possibility that party support to minority candidates is contingent on the demographics of the district. If district demographic influences the decision to support minority candidates, we should see a negative coefficient for interactions between percentage white in a district and candidate race. This would indicate that increasing numbers of minorities in a district leads to more party support for minority candidates (and less party support for white candidates). As Table 3 illustrates, differences in party support for minority candidates do not vary significantly by district demographics. There is no variation in party support of minority or white candidates by the racial demographics of the district. As shown in the second and third columns of Table 3, there no effects of conditional support for minority candidates for either Democrats and Republicans. For both parties, minority candidates running in minority districts are not more likely to receive support from the party.

We also ran an additional model that included district demographic interactions with the full variety of candidate ethnicities. This model (shown in Table **??** in the online appendix) also shows that parties do not appear to be more likely to provide higher levels of party support to racial candidates in districts where there are larger co-ethnic populations. Parties do not appear to take into account district demographics when lending their support to minority candidates and thus the evidence suggests a lack of support for the conditional party support hypothesis.

Lastly, Table 3 also provides strong evidence that parties (specifically the Democratic party) are more supportive of women candidates. While women candidates do not receive more party support overall than men, this overall effect masks strong differences by party. Republican women do not receive more support from party connected donors than their male counterparts. Democratic women, on the other hand, receive significantly and substantively more support from the party. On average Democratic women receive eight donations more from donors who were connected to the party's Hill Committee (an increase of roughly 1/5 standard deviations or a slightly bigger effect than that of being a candidate with previous elected experience).

Party Support of Minority Women

While Democratic women candidate appear to receive additional support relative to other Democratic candidates, we also investigated the possibility that this support might be limited to white women candidates. Indeed, our findings suggest this support for women candidates appears to be focused on white women candidates rather than minorities. Table 4 separates out the effects for white women and minority women candidates by party. We find that while party support from Democrats for white women candidates is significantly greater than support for white men candidates, there is no similar difference in the support for minority women candidates. The emphasis of the Democratic Party to support women candidates appears to be largely focused on advancing the candidacies of white women candidates rather than their minority counterparts.

[Table 4 about here]

Party Support and Candidate Success by Race and Gender

Finally, we also examine whether the effects of party support on candidate success in the primary vary by candidate race and gender. Previous research has found that party support helps a candidate to be successful in winning congressional nominations (Hassell, 2018*b*). In this section, we examine whether the effects of party support on primary success are the same for all types of candidates. We test this by using a logit model that examines the effect of race and party support on whether the candidate won the primary. Table 5 presents estimates of the effect of party support on victory probabilities in primaries. Consistent with previous research, we find that party support has a significant impact on the electoral fortunes of primary candidates. More importantly, however, for this exercise, we do not find different effects of party support for minorities and women.[15] In this scenario, we find that minorities and women are no more or less likely to experience primary electoral victories as the support they receive from the party increases relative to male candidates. In short, our findings cannot conclude that the influence that parties have is different for different candidates. Party support does not appear to be more effective for whites than for minorities, or for men than for women.

[Table 5 about here]

Discussion and Conclusion

Given the important role that parties play in helping candidates get through the nomination process and the under representation of minorities and women in public office, we look at the role of parties at helping (or hindering) the ability of minority and women candidates to get into office through the provision of access to party support. Our results do

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[15]The effects for minority Republican candidates approach significance ($p<0.06$) as do the overall effects for women candidates ($p<0.12$). However, given the large sample size, we cannot merely attribute the lack of effects to a small sample.

provide some positive news that party elites do not appear to be discriminatory against the candidacies of minorities and women in the primary election. While both parties have had a history of discrimination towards minorities (Frymer, 2010), our results show that, at least when it comes to accessing funds through party networks, the parties do not appear to favor whites over non-white candidates. Moreover, we also find that Democrats do appear to be more supportive of women candidates. Democratic women candidates are more likely to receive the support from the party necessary to make it through the primary election process. However, these effects appear to be focused on white women. While minorities do not appear to be at any disadvantage at acquiring support from the party, they also do not appear to have the same level of support that women do, and particularly white women.

We also find that local district demographic considerations have little influence on who parties decide to support. While some have hypothesized that parties might support candidates that would be most likely to win in the general election, interactions with candidate race and proportion of the district that is a co-ethnic with that candidate yields insignificant results. These results indicate that the support parties lend to minority candidates is driven by something other than the electoral benefits that might come with the success of an ethnic candidate running in a district with a large co-ethnic population.

Indeed, this lack of strategic support could be a contributing factor in the general lack of racial diversity in Congress, as prior literature has found that how potential candidates view party structures has an influence on whether they seek office (Butler and Preece, 2016; Crowder-Meyer, 2013). This agnostic take towards minority candidates (especially in majority-minority districts) within both parties could be seen as a contributing factor in a general lack of supply of minority candidates, particularly in districts that are majority or plurality white (Branton, 2009; Shah, 2014). This agnosticism towards these candidates may also contribute towards the ambivalence many minorities have expressed towards the major parties (Hajnal and Lee, 2011; Herndon, 2018) as well as the steep turnout differential between whites and non-whites (Fraga, 2018).

On the other hand, our findings provide support for the argument that both parties behave differently when it comes to promoting women candidates, with the Democratic Party providing significantly more support for women than Republicans. Our findings echo contemporary research on women's representation within the parties that has found that interest groups oriented towards descriptive representation for women candidates have become increasingly influential and central within the Democratic Party network, which has in turn, led to a prioritization of women candidates within the party (Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman, 2018). It's important to note that the support that women get from Democratic Party networks does not extend to non-white women candidates, potentially contributing to the relative dearth of minority women candidates in American politics (Shah, Scott and Juenke, 2018).

Another possible interpretation of our results is that groups demanding descriptive representation for minority groups have yet to achieve the same level of influence in the parties that women's groups have within the Democratic Party, and that one of the potential ways to encourage more descriptive representation for racial minorities would be the empowerment of these groups within the major parties. Indeed, recent accounts have highlighted the efforts of such groups to have an impact on the Democratic Party's recruitment and support of minority candidates (Herndon, 2018). It might be reasonable to expect that the promotion of the candidacies of underrepresented minorities in part depends on the integration within the party network of groups demanding better minority representation as a policy outcome. In that vein, as parties are constantly changing to adapt to a changing electorate and as groups within the party network that demand descriptive representation become more or less powerful in the parties, we might expect future research on this topic to produce different results. To that end, we strongly encourage scholars to revisit this question in the future.

It is important to contextualize these findings by emphasizing that the analysis conducted in this paper assumes that the men and women competing for office are the similar (or at least that by controlling for a measure of candidate quality, we can account for

those difference). However, women and men do not run for the same offices or at the same rates and the pipeline to political office is different for men and for women (Fox and Oxley, 2003; Preece and Stoddard, 2015). Prior research has found that women and minority candidates who run for political office, especially high office, often of higher quality in order to compensate for potential discrimination against their candidacies (Anzia and Berry, 2011; Barnes, Branton and Cassese, 2017; Fulton, 2010; Lawless and Pearson, 2010; Shah, 2014). Prior research on both women racial minority candidates have found that both women and minorities have suffered from "candidate pipeline" issue, in which the women and minority candidates who do seek office are often successful but that perceived discrimination by voters and by party elites often deter many from seeking office except for the exceptional few from seeking office to begin with (Butler and Preece, 2016; Shah, 2014; Shah, Scott and Juenke, 2018).

Given that this paper only looks at candidates who have gotten to the stage of actively running for office, it is important to temper our findings in two ways. First, while we find that parties are mostly agnostic in who they support between women, minority candidates, and white candidates (with the exception of white women in the Democratic Party), this observed agnosticism could be despite a generally higher quality of women and minority candidates when compared to white male candidates, and this potential discrimination is not picked up in our analysis.[16] Second, we look at one part of the "candidate pipeline" and it is also entirely possible that discrimination of women and minority candidates by the parties occurs earlier in the political process, including the candidate recruitment process.

Our results suggest that party action in the primary is not a significant barrier to better representation of women and minorities but also that increased action from national parties could play a role in closing the representation gap for underrepresented minorities in Congress, as party support has a uniform effect on nomination success for all types of

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[16]Although noted in Table **??** in the online appendix, the results are the same even when we look at primaries in competitive districts where candidates have the same previous elected experience.

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candidates. We show here that party support has the same effect for minority and women candidates as it does for white candidates on their ability to succeed in the nomination process. As such, discussions about the representation gap and how to narrow it should consider the role parties should can play in promoting candidates from underrepresented groups and helping them to succeed in the electoral process.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1: Primary Candidate Race by Party

	Democratic Party	Republican Party
White	1,443	2,409
Black	329	113
Latino	150	105
Asian	76	42
Men	1,546	2,366
Women	458	308

Note: Includes all primary candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives from 2010-2014.

Table 2: Average Party Support for Primary Election Candidates

	Average Party Support	*Republican Support*	*Democratic Support*
White Men	17.4	14.0	23.8
White Women	33.7	15.0	51.7
Minority Men	14.4	17.6	12.6
Minority Women	14.8	7.2	17.1

Note: Includes all major party candidates on the primary ballot for the U.S. House of Representatives from 2010-2014. Party support is measured using the number of donors a candidate shares with his or her party Hill Committee (the DCCC or the NRCC) during the primary.

Table 3: Party Support in Primary Elections by Race and Gender

	All Party Support	**Republicans** Party Support	**Democrats** Party Support
Minority	-14.11	-14.43	-13.58
	(8.94)	(14.66)	(11.32)
Minority * District %White	0.19	0.36	-0.004
	(0.13)	(0.21)	(0.17)
Women	3.54	-0.12	8.33*
	(2.11)	(2.77)	(3.21)
Incumbent	34.57**	37.66**	29.73**
	(2.68)	(3.34)	(4.44)
Candidate Quality	4.55*	2.87	8.16*
	(1.90)	(2.25)	(3.51)
Constant	4.46**	3.13**	8.82**
	(0.96)	(1.06)	(1.98)
Number of Fixed Effects	839	524	315
Observations	2,296	1,544	752
R-squared	0.13	0.15	0.12

Note: Includes all primary candidates running in contested primary elections, 2010-2014. OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$.

Table 4: Party Support in Primary Elections: Intersection of Race and Gender

	Republicans Party Support	Democrats Party Support
Minority Men	-20.21	-9.41
	(16.37)	(11.82)
Minority Men * District %White	0.48*	-0.02
	(0.24)	(0.18)
Minority Women	17.36	-15.48
	(28.42)	(13.37)
Minority Women * District %White	-0.47	0.09
	(0.41)	(0.24)
White Women	1.54	13.19**
	(2.98)	(4.27)
Incumbent	37.79**	29.84**
	(3.33)	(4.44)
Candidate Quality	2.68	7.98*
	(2.25)	(3.51)
Constant	3.04**	7.95**
	(1.06)	(2.04)
Observations	1,544	752
R-squared	0.15	0.12
Number of Fixed Effects	524	315

Note: Includes all primary candidates running in contested primary elections, 2010-2014. OLS coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses. **p<0.01, *p<0.05.

Table 5: Effect of Party Support by Race and Gender on Winning Primary

	Win Primary	Win Primary	R Only	R Only	D Only	D Only
Party Support	0.03**	0.03**	0.03**	0.03**	0.02**	0.02*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Logged Fundraising	0.21**	0.21**	0.32**	0.31**	0.14**	0.13**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Minority	-0.14	-0.17	-0.01	0.16	-0.35	-0.63*
	(0.13)	(0.17)	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.18)	(0.25)
Woman	0.09	0.26	-0.12	-0.004	0.28	0.45
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.21)	(0.23)
Minority * Party Support		-0.002		-0.02		0.03
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.02)
Woman * Party Support		-0.02		-0.02		-0.01
		(0.01)		(0.02)		(0.01)
Candidate Quality	0.76**	0.75**	0.74**	0.74**	0.66**	0.68**
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.18)	(0.19)
Constant	-3.34**	-3.33**	-4.65**	-4.63**	-2.26**	-2.19**
	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.60)	(0.58)	(0.28)	(0.28)
Observations	2,296	2,296	1,544	1,544	752	752
Pseudo R-Squared	0.20	0.21	0.24	0.24	0.16	0.17
Log Likelihood	-1191.8	-1188.6	-748.3	-746.1	-422.7	-418.4

Note: Candidates competing in contested primary elections, 2010-2014. Logit coefficients. Clustered standard errors in parenthesis. *p<0.05; **p<0.01