

Entering the Arena? Gender and the Decision to Run for Office

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A critical void in the research on women's underrepresentation in elective office is an analysis of the initial decision to run for office. Based on data from our Citizen Political Ambition Study, the first large-scale national survey of potential candidates, we examine the process by which women and men emerge as candidates for public office. We find that women who share the same personal characteristics and professional credentials as men express significantly lower levels of political ambition to hold elective office. Two factors explain this gender gap: first, women are far less likely than men to be encouraged to run for office; second, women are significantly less likely than men to view themselves as qualified to run. Our findings call into question the leading theoretical explanations for women's numeric underrepresentation and indicate that, because of vestiges of traditional sex-role socialization, prospects for gender parity in U.S. political institutions are less promising than conventional explanations suggest.

When the 108th Congress convened, 86% of its members were male (CAWP 2003). This places the United States 59th worldwide in terms of the number of women serving in the national legislature (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2003). The dearth of women in elective office is also evident at the state and local levels: 88% of state governors, 88% of big-city mayors, and 78% of state legislators are male (CAWP 2003). Particularly striking about these large gender disparities in elective office is that neither qualitative investigations nor empirical analyses reveal a political system rife with gender bias. Rather, individual accounts of women candidates who face overt gender discrimination once they enter the public arena are increasingly rare (Schroeder 1999; Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994; Woods 2000). Moreover, in terms of fundraising and vote totals, often considered the two most important indicators of electoral success, researchers find that women fare just as well as, if not better than, their male counterparts (Burrell 1998; Darcy, Welch and Clark 1994; Dolan 1998; Fox 2000; Smith and Fox 2001; Thompson and Steckenrider 1997). In fact, based

on a national study of voting patterns, Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton state emphatically: "A candidate's sex does not affect his or her chances of winning an election. . . . Winning elections has nothing to do with the sex of the candidate" (1997, 79).

In light of the seeming contradiction between a political system that elects few women and an electoral environment that is unbiased against women candidates, political scientists focus on two theoretical explanations for women's numeric underrepresentation. First, they point to the incumbency advantage, where reelection rates for legislative positions are consistently above 90%. Under these circumstances, increasing the number of electoral opportunities for previously excluded groups can be glacial (Carroll and Jenkins 2001; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Jacobson 2000). Second, researchers point to the "eligibility pool" to explain the low number of women candidates and elected officials (Conway, Steurnagle, and Ahern 1997; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Duerst-Lahti 1998; Thomas 1998). Simply too few women occupy high-level positions in the professions

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that serve as pipelines to careers in politics (Clark 1994).

Common to both of these explanations is the expectation that, as more women enter the pool of qualified candidates, women will increasingly be presented with good opportunities for political success and electoral victory. Further, each explanation expects that potential women candidates will respond to political opportunities in the same ways that men traditionally have. The incumbency explanation relies on the premise that both sexes, when presented with similar electoral opportunities for open seats, will employ similar cost-benefit analyses when deciding whether to enter the race (e.g., Kazee 1994; Schlesinger 1966; Stone and Maisel 2003). The eligibility pool explanation posits that as women's presence in the fields of law and business becomes more comparable to men's, so too will their economic status and their likelihood of seeking elected positions (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994). Accordingly, most studies of gender and political candidacies conclude that the remedy for gender disparities in elective office is an increase in women's proportions in the pipeline professions.

To assess prospects for gender parity in our electoral system based on these institutional explanations is to fail to consider a critical piece of the candidate emergence process: the manner in which gender interacts with the initial decision to run for office. With the exception of one poll conducted by the National Women's Political Caucus (1994) and one single-state study of potential candidates (Fox, Lawless, and Feeley 2001), little scholarly attention is devoted to the process by which gender affects men and women's emergence as candidates for public office.

A wide body of literature on the impact of traditional gender socialization in the electoral process, however, continues to find that sex plays a significant role in the manner in which actual candidates and office-holders retrospectively assess their initial decisions to run for office (e.g., Fowler and McClure 1989). Although this body of research does not speak directly to potential candidates, it identifies several specific ways in which the decision calculus involved in deciding whether to enter an electoral contest may differ significantly for potential women and men candidates. Studies comparing geographic regions, for instance, find that women are more likely to emerge as candidates when they live in areas with less traditional political cultures (e.g., Fox 2000; Hill 1981; Rule 1990). Other investigations find that women in politics are more concerned than men with balancing their career and familial responsibilities (Fox, Lawless, and Feeley 2001; Jamieson 1995; Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1995). Analyses also point to the fact that, since their entry into the public sphere has not traditionally

been embraced, women candidates and office-holders are more concerned with their qualifications, substantive credentials, and policy expertise and motivations, all of which help them gain legitimacy in the political arena (Dodson 1998; Fowler and McClure 1989; Niven 1998; Sanbonmatsu 2002b; Swers 2002). In short, these empirical findings, coupled with the lack of scholarly attention devoted to the initial decision to run for office, suggest that it may be erroneous to conclude that we have a "gender-neutral" electoral process simply because "end-stage" assessments indicate that women and men perform equally well in elections.

This article presents the results of the Citizen Political Ambition Study, the first national survey of potential candidates in the "eligibility pool" for all levels of elective office. Our analysis fills a theoretical and methodological void in the literature that examines gender's role in the electoral process. Foremost, our unique research design allows us to assess whether men and women potential candidates who share the same personal characteristics and professional credentials hold similar levels of political ambition at the earliest stage of the candidate-emergence process. We find that at the aggregate level, women, even in the top tier of professional accomplishment, are less likely than their male counterparts to consider running for political office. This suggests that the costs to entering the political arena are different for women and men. We then use gender socialization as a lens through which to explain the individual-level differences we uncover. The results of our systematic analysis of the initial decision to run for office indicate that current theories accounting for women's underrepresentation are inadequate and that prospects for gender parity in U.S. political institutions are less promising than the conventional wisdom suggests.

The Citizen Political Ambition Study

The Citizen Political Ambition Study serves as a breakthrough, for it provides the first research design that allows for an examination of gender differences in the manner in which women and men emerge as candidates for the first public office they seek. Despite the importance of exploring this question, research in this area is limited because an empirical study of how people choose to run for office is very difficult to execute. Many undocumented considerations enter the decision to run, thereby causing a number of sample design issues to confront. Primarily, when a potential candidate decides not to enter a race, the decision is often unknown, thereby making it difficult to assemble a reasonable sample. In addition, many individuals

who ultimately run for office may never have considered themselves potential candidates prior to being recruited to run. It is difficult to construct a sample that accounts for local and state party organizations' widely varying recruitment efforts. Finally, political concerns can impede research attempts to identify potential candidates (Maisel and Stone 1998). These methodological difficulties have generally meant that information pertaining to political ambition and the decision to run for office comes entirely from samples of actual candidates and office-holders (see Rohde 1979).

More recently, a small group of scholars have attempted to examine questions of political ambition among potential candidates (Kazee 1994; Stone and Maisel 2003). These candidate emergence studies employ a "reputational approach" for sampling; a pool of potential candidates is compiled by seeking out from a cross-section of communities current office-holders and "political informants," many of whom are party leaders, convention delegates, county chairs, elected officials, and political and community activists. Researchers ask the informants to name prospective, viable candidates, typically for election to the House of Representatives. The prospects are then contacted and surveyed, as are many current office-holders who are positioned to run for higher office.

While the reputational approach allows scholars to shed substantial light on questions of ambition for high-level office, it succumbs to several notable limitations when we turn to the initial decision to seek entry into the political sphere. In most states, politics is a career ladder (see Black 1972; Jacobson 2000; Kazee 1994; Prinz 1993; Rohde 1979; Schlesinger 1966). Prospective candidates for state- and national-level positions may have already made the initial decision to run when they opted to enter a race for a local office. Studies that focus on the decision to seek high-level office, therefore, are likely to identify as potential candidates individuals for whom the *initial* decision to run has long since passed. Further, contacting only elected officials and informants for the names of potential candidates restricts the sample to individuals who are currently deemed ready to run. Men and women who may be well positioned to consider a candidacy later in life are overlooked. The reputational approach also invites the possibility of informants' own gender, race, and class biases to influence the prospects they name (Maisel and Stone 1998). This concern is particularly relevant when we turn to questions of gender, since bias can easily result in too few women being identified and, therefore, prohibit statistical comparisons among women in the pool.

In an effort to overcome the limitations of the reputational approach, we developed the "eligibility pool

approach." This research design involves compiling a random, national sample of citizens who occupy the professions that are most likely to precede a career in politics. The sample is stratified by sex, so as to avoid informant bias and ensure an equal number of men and women potential candidates. Our approach also allows us to consider a broad range of potential candidates, since we can tap into interest in running for offices other than those at the state or national level.

To execute the Citizen Political Ambition Study, we administered by mail a four-page survey to a national sample of 6,800 men and women, each of whom could be considered part of the "eligibility pool" (for a detailed description of the sampling design and methods, see Appendix A). The survey asks respondents about their socio-demographic backgrounds, familial arrangements, political outlooks and experiences, and perceptions and willingness to run for office. The sample consists of an equal number of men and women in the three professions that tend to yield the highest proportion of political candidacies: law, business, and education (CAWP 2001; Dolan and Ford 1997; Gray, Hanson, and Jacob 1999; Moncrief, Squire, and Jewell 2001). A group of political activists supplements the national sample.

This conception of the eligibility pool serves as a stringent test case through which to explore gender differences in political ambition. Female lawyers and business leaders have already entered and succeeded in male-dominated fields, which suggests that the women in the sample may have overcome the forces of traditional socialization to a greater extent than the overall population of potential women candidates. Women comprise only approximately 15% of the partners in the nation's law firms (National Association for Law Placement Foundation 1999) and less than 5% of the chief executive officers, presidents, senior vice presidents, and chief financial officers in the largest companies throughout the United States (Reutter 2000). Although this sampling design allows us to compare levels of political ambition across these professions, it does not allow us to determine whether the gender dynamics within each profession require more extraordinary commitments of time and effort by women than men, which would preclude investments in the political arena. We balance this gendered conception of the eligibility pool by equally representing educators and political activists, two professions from which women are more likely than men to emerge as candidates (CAWP 2001).

Our results are based on responses from 3,765 respondents (1,969 men and 1,796 women). After taking into account undeliverable surveys, this represents a 60% response rate, which is higher than that of typical elite

sample mail surveys (see Carroll 1994; Fox, Lawless, and Feeley 2001; Stone and Maisel 2003). No remarkable socio-demographic, geographic, or professional differences distinguish the samples of men from women professional elites (see Appendix B for a description of the sample). In short, our approach and sample allow us to offer a more complete assessment of the extent to which the dearth of women in elective office can be attributed to institutional inertia, as opposed to vestiges of traditional sex-role socialization.

Gender, Candidate Emergence, and Prospects for Women's Representation

General studies of political ambition conclude that, as rational actors, potential candidates are more likely to seek office when they face favorable political and structural circumstances. The number of open seats, term-limit requirements, levels of legislative professionalization, partisan composition of the constituency, and the party of the potential candidate relative to that of the incumbent are among the factors men and women consider when seeking elective positions or deciding whether to run for a higher office (Black 1972; Kazee 1994; Moncrief, Squire, and Jewell 2001; Rohde 1979; Schlesinger 1966; Stone and Maisel 2003). In conceptualizing ambition this way, the decision to run for office is primarily a strategic response to an opportunity structure; with the exception of general gauges of political interest, financial security, and political experience, potential candidates' personal circumstances are treated as relatively exogenous. This framework predicts that women and men from similar professional and socio-demographic backgrounds are equally likely to move from the pool of eligible candidates into positions of elective office.

But this rational choice approach to ambition is almost certainly flawed when we consider potential candidates who do not currently hold office. In order to leave the pool of eligible candidates and run for office, potential candidates undergo a two-stage process that serves as a precursor to the strategic side of the decision to run. First, they must consider running for elective office; potential candidates will never emerge as actual candidates if the notion of launching a campaign and what that entails does not enter into their frame of consciousness. Only after the notion of a candidacy crosses a potential candidate's mind can he/she determine that the benefits to entering the electoral arena outweigh the costs. The central question before us, therefore, is whether sex interacts

with either stage of this process by which qualified individuals select to be actual candidates.¹

Results from the Citizen Political Ambition Study reveal that gender does, in fact, play a substantial role in the initial decision to run for office. Figure 1 depicts the process by which potential candidates move into positions of political power. The leftmost box contains roughly equal samples of men and women who comprise the pool of potential office-holders: lawyers, business leaders and executives, educators, and political activists. The figure's final box illustrates the likelihood that a candidate wins the race. As we would expect from the body of literature on gender and elections, there is no statistically significant gender difference between men and women's likelihood of winning political contests: 63% of the women and 59% of the men in the eligibility pool who ran for office launched successful campaigns.² Of course, this finding means only that there appear to be no gender differences at the *end stage* of the electoral process.

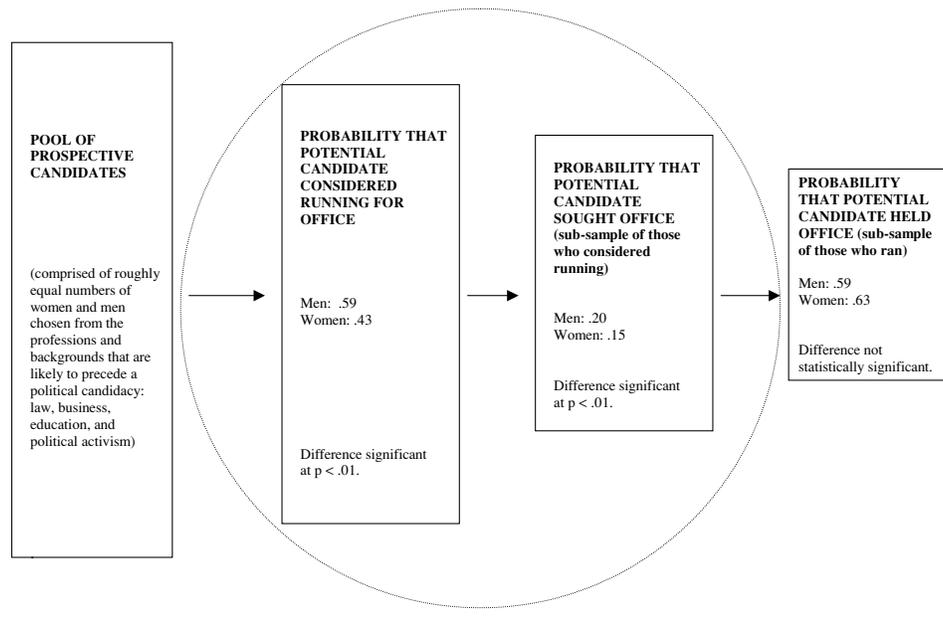
The second and third boxes in the figure shed light on the gender dynamics of the candidate emergence process. The second box from the left is comprised of those members of the eligibility pool who "considered" running for any political office. More than half of the respondents (51%) stated that the idea of running for an elective position at least "crossed their mind." Turning to the gender breakdown of the respondents who considered a candidacy, though, a significant gender difference emerges: 59% of the men, compared to 43% of the women, considered running for office (difference significant at $p < .01$).³ And, as indicated by the logistic regression coefficients in Table 1, sex remains a significant predictor of considering a candidacy even after controlling for

¹It is also important to acknowledge that women may process the strategic side of the decision to run differently than men. Our eligibility-pool approach means that we must forego analysis of the structural variables that might exert an impact on the decision to enter the electoral arena. If we focused on a single race or election, the number of potential candidates would be extremely small. Accordingly, in order to study the initial decision to run, we assembled a broad sample at the expense of analyzing the strategic aspects of the decision calculus. Unquestionably, this approach carries consequences for our conception of ambition (see Barber 1965 and Lasswell 1948 for a similar conception).

²The absence of a gender gap in the probability of winning an election is not due to the fact that women tend to run for lower status offices than do men. Eighty-eight percent of the men and 90% of the women who won their races sought local-level positions; 11% of the men and 10% of the women who won their races ran at the state level; and 1% of the men and none of the women who ran for a federal level office won their elections.

³Although the proportion of respondents who considered running for office differs by profession, with lawyers and political activists most likely to have considered a candidacy, the gender differential is statistically significant at $p < .01$ within each subgroup.

FIGURE 1 Candidate Emergence from the Pool of Prospective Candidates



education, income, race, political party and attitudes, previous campaign experience, and whether the respondent ever received external encouragement to run for office, most of which are traditional correlates of political interest, participation, and ambition (see Bledsoe and Herring 1990; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Fox, Lawless, and Feeley 2001; Stone and Maisel 2003; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; see Appendix C for variable coding).

Such high levels of interest in considering a candidacy may appear suspect, even among a sample of professional elites. The measure, however, is aimed to capture even the slightest inclination of pursuing a candidacy. Nonetheless, in order to ensure that respondents' attitudes toward considering a candidacy were not merely an artifact of being asked the question, we asked potential candidates whether they took any of the steps required to mount a political campaign. More specifically, they were asked whether they ever investigated how to place their name on the ballot or ever discussed running with potential donors, party or community leaders, family members, or friends. Comparisons between men and women's answers to all of these questions again highlight stark gender differences. Table 2 reveals that, across professions, men are always at least 50% more likely than women to have engaged in each of these fundamental campaign steps (gender differences significant at $p < .01$). Based on a va-

riety of measures, what started out as a gender-balanced eligibility pool winnows to one that is dominated by men.

When we move to the third box in the figure and examine those members of the sample who actually ran for elective office, gender differences again emerge, although they are of a smaller magnitude: 20% of the men, compared to 15% of the women, who considered running for office actually chose to seek an elected position (difference significant at $p < .01$). Once again, this gender difference withstands statistical controls for the aforementioned demographic, political, and structural variables (Table 1, column 2).⁴ It is also noteworthy that women potential candidates' lower levels of political ambition are not a result of the fact that women are not as interested as men in politics and the seemingly male-dominated political arena (see Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Burt-Way and Kelly 1992; Carroll 1994; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Fox 1997). Women in the sample are more likely than men to express a high degree of interest in both local (49% of women, compared to 41% of men) and national

⁴Statewide structural variables (not shown) tend not to predict whether a potential candidate decides to enter a race. We attribute this to the fact that nearly 85% of the respondents who ran for office sought local, county, or municipal level positions. These structural variables would have an effect only at statewide and congressional levels.

TABLE 1 Candidate Emergence from the Eligibility Pool: Logistic Regression Coefficients (and Standard Errors)

	Considered Running for Elective Office		Ran for Elective Office	
Sex (Female)	-.73**	(.09)	-.37*	(.15)
Education	.12*	(.05)	.05	(.07)
Income	-.15**	(.04)	-.09	(.06)
Race (White)	.37**	(.12)	.09	(.19)
Democrat	.18	(.11)	.22	(.19)
Republican	.11	(.12)	.26	(.20)
Political Knowledge	.07	(.05)	.19	(.12)
Political Interest	.10**	(.03)	.23**	(.06)
Political Efficacy	.08	(.05)	-.04	(.07)
Previous Campaign Experience	.43**	(.07)	.11	(.11)
Received Encouragement from Nonpolitical Source	1.80**	(.10)	-.35	(.26)
Received Encouragement from Political Actor	.94**	(.11)	1.39**	(.21)
Constant	-2.76**	(.37)	-1.48*	(.67)
Pseudo-R ²	.44		.15	
Percent Correctly Predicted	76.3		83.4	
N	3,202		1,636	

Significance levels: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 2 Gender Differences in Considering a Run for Political Office (across professions)

Question: Have you ever . . .		
	Women	Men
Considered running for office?	43%	59%
Discussed running with friends and family?	22	33
Discussed running with community leaders?	9	15
Investigated how to place your name on the ballot?	6	13
Discussed running with party leaders?	6	12
Solicited or discussed financial contributions with potential supporters?	3	7
N	1,711	1,812

Note: For each item, the Chi Square test comparing women and men is significant at $p < .01$.

(41% of women, compared to 31% of men) politics (differences significant at $p < .01$). Women, therefore, are at least as well positioned as men not only in terms of professional accomplishment and socioeconomic status, but also general interest in the political sphere.

Together, the second and third boxes of Figure 1 illustrate the precarious assumption on which current prescriptions for increasing the number of women in positions of political power are predicated. Despite starting out with relatively equal proportions of similarly situated and equally credentialed women and men as potential candidates, and regardless of the fact that women are just as likely as men to win elections, men are nearly twice as likely as women to hold elected office: 7% of the men, compared to less than 4% of the women, from the initial pool of potential candidates hold an elective position (difference significant at $p < .01$).

For more than a decade, scholars focusing on gender and elections have pointed to the importance of the candidate emergence process and the initial decision to run as the critical areas on which we must focus if we are to achieve a complete understanding of prospects for gender parity in our political institutions (e.g., Sanbonmatsu 2002b; Niven 1998; Fowler and McClure 1989). Empirically, our results provide the first piece of evidence—nationwide—that women elites are significantly less likely than their male counterparts to emerge as candidates. Theoretically, our results indicate that the conventional institutional explanations that account for women's numeric underrepresentation are incomplete and somewhat misleading. The challenge to which we now turn is to account for the sources of the gender gap in the initial decision to run for office.

Traditional Gender Socialization and the Gender Gap in Political Ambition

Gender socialization theory offers the most compelling lens through which to understand the gender gap we uncovered in Figure 1. Traditional sex-role socialization, defined by Conover and Gray as a “division of activities into the public extra-familial jobs done by the male and the private intra-familial ones performed by the female” (1983, 2–3), has historically resulted in men’s entry into the public world of politics and women’s relegation to the private realm of the home. As we enter the twenty-first century, the extent to which socialized norms and traditional family structures impede women’s entrance into politics is certainly diminishing. But recent studies of gender in the electoral process, based largely on women who have already entered the electoral arena, identify four general areas in which vestiges of traditional gender role orientations may affect both the likelihood of considering a candidacy and the propensity to launch an actual campaign.

Political Culture

Evidence suggests that the political environment can have a gendered effect on citizens’ attitudes about entering the political system. Hill (1981) finds, for example, that, among citizens who choose to run for office, women are more likely to emerge as candidates in states that established an early pattern of electing women to the state legislature, support women’s participation in public affairs, and do not have a tradition of sex discrimination in income, or gender disparities in educational achievement. Women are less likely to run for office in states with a traditional culture (Hill 1981; Nechemias 1987; Rule 1990), such as those located in the south (Fox 2000). Despite the fact that the men and women in the Citizen Political Ambition Study are similar in terms of geographic dispersion, we might expect that women in certain political environments will be less likely to think about running for office, whereas the political culture in which men exist will not have an impact on the decision to seek an elective position.

Family Responsibilities

Many of the barriers to women’s advancement in formerly male fields is drastically changing; women now enter law schools and MPA programs at equal levels with men (McGlen and O’Connor 1998). Similarly, women’s presence in the fields of business and law has increased

dramatically over the last thirty years (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Reingold 2000). But women in positions of power have historically faced greater demands than men regarding how to balance their career and familial responsibilities (see Jamieson 1995; Witt, Paget, and Matthews 1994). Contemporary studies of family gender dynamics reveal that women, even in two-career households, are still more likely than their spouses to spend time raising children and completing household tasks, such as cleaning and laundry (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; McGlen and O’Connor 1998). This division of labor often results in women candidates and elected officials feeling obligated to consider family responsibilities more carefully than do their male counterparts (Burrell 1994; Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern 1997; Fowler and McClure 1989).

When we consider the household division of labor in the Citizen Political Ambition Study sample, we see that women who live with a spouse or partner are approximately seven times more likely than men to be responsible for more of the household tasks; the numbers are similar for childcare arrangements. These results might account for women’s lesser likelihood of considering a run for office.⁵

Self-Perceived Qualifications

A third consideration that might have a gendered impact on the initial decision to run for office pertains to respondents’ self-perceived qualifications. The literature on gender socialization tends not to include these types of perceptions among the various ways that patterns of traditional socialization manifest themselves. In depth examinations of campaigns, however, continue to show that gender stereotypes affect the manner in which media, party recruiters, and candidates assess men and women’s electoral prospects (Flammang 1997; Fox 1997; Kahn 1996; Niven 1998). Voters also engage in such stereotyping. Even by the late 1990s, for example, approximately 15% of General Social Survey respondents openly agreed that “women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men.” More than 20% of Americans agreed with the statement: “Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women.” Regardless of their actual qualifications and credentials, women have likely been socialized to perceive themselves

⁵Eighty-four percent of men in the sample were married, compared to 66% of women; and men were 17 percentage points more likely than women to have children (differences significant at $p < .01$). Consistent with earlier analyses of professional women, these findings suggest that to achieve the professional accomplishment of this group, some women may have eschewed traditional family arrangements (see Carroll and Strimling 1983).

as less qualified to enter politics. In fact, when asked to place themselves on a continuum from “not at all qualified” to “very qualified” to run for office, the male potential candidates in our sample are nearly twice as likely as the female potential candidates (26%, compared to 14%) to deem themselves “very qualified” for an elected position (difference significant at $p < .01$).

We might also expect traditional socialization to play a role in the degree to which potential candidates rely on their self-perceived qualifications when considering a candidacy, since we know from the ambition theory literature that politicians tend to behave in ways that maximize their likelihood of attaining higher office (Schlesinger 1966). Even though the literature is silent concerning the initial decision to run (Williams 1993; see also Squire 1993), we might expect women to be more likely than their male counterparts to emphasize their substantive credentials, perhaps in an effort to gain legitimacy for their candidacies (see Fowler and McClure 1989; Kahn 1996; Sanbonmatsu 2002b).

Ideological Motivations

Finally, traditional gender socialization may influence the decision to run for office in terms of ideological motivations. Surveys of actual candidates reveal that women are more likely to become involved in politics when motivated by policy issues surrounding the interests of women and children (Swers 2002; Thomas 1994; see also Dodson 1998). Further, women candidates and elected officials are often seen as more credible than men regarding “women’s issues,” such as health care, the environment, and helping the poor (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a, 1993b; Leeper 1991). Whereas men of all political proclivities might be equally likely to think about a candidacy, women may need an additional policy boost to spur them on to consider running for office, if for no reason other than the legitimacy conferred by a focus on women’s issues and interests.

Traditional Gender Socialization and Considering a Candidacy

In order to explore the degree to which traditional gender socialization accounts for the gender gap in potential candidates’ likelihood of considering running for office, measures of political culture, familial arrangements and responsibilities, self-perceived qualifications, and ideological motivations supplement the explanatory variables used in the logistic regression equation in Table 1 (see

Appendix C for coding).⁶ Somewhat surprisingly, sex remains a significant predictor of considering a candidacy even after controlling for the series of socio-demographic and political variables, as well as the “traditional socialization” variables. When we calculate the substantive effects of the logistic regression coefficients in the first column of Table 3, we see that, on average, women are 14 percentage points less likely than men to consider running for office. The “average” woman has a predicted probability of 0.56 of having considered a run for office; an identical man in the sample has a 0.70 likelihood of thinking about a candidacy (difference significant at $p < .01$).⁷

Unexpectedly, most of the traditional gender socialization variables fail to meet conventional levels of statistical significance. Neither political culture nor family structures and arrangements influence the likelihood of considering a candidacy, although both men and women are less likely to think about running for office as they age.⁸ Women’s circumstances of being the primary caretakers of the home and the children do not depress their likelihood of running. And ideological motivations do not have an impact on the propensity to consider running for office. The traditional barriers to women’s entry into the political sphere, therefore, no longer appear to impede their likelihood of thinking about a political candidacy.

Of course, we cannot fully dismiss these variables’ effects without examining the degree to which they interact with the sex of the respondent. The second column of Table 3 presents the results of an interactive model that predicts whether a respondent considered running for office. Only one interaction term—self-perceived qualifications—achieves statistical significance. The interaction between the sex of the respondent and the respondent’s self-perceived qualifications is so strong, though, that it mitigates sex’s independent effect.⁹ Table 4,

⁶Regression analysis with controls (dummy variables) for three of the four professions do not change the direction on any of the coefficients or any of the levels of statistical significance.

⁷Our analysis is based on setting all continuous independent variables to their means and dummy variables to their modes. All analysis was performed separately on each profession subsample; similar results across professions indicated that pooling the data was appropriate.

⁸The results are similar when age is coded in terms of cohorts.

⁹Regression analyses with interaction terms between the significant background variables and the sex of the respondent indicate that the traditional correlates of political ambition do not exert differential impacts on men and women. Because of concerns about multicollinearity, the regression analysis was performed including only the statistically significant interaction term, as well as including the interaction terms one at a time. In each of these specifications, the only interaction term that achieves statistical significance is female * self-perceived qualifications.

TABLE 3 Who Considers Running and Who Runs for Office (of those respondents who considered it?): Logistic Regression Coefficients and Standard Errors

	Considering a Candidacy		Running for Office	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Socio-Demographics				
Sex (Female)	-.62** (.11)	-.75 (.52)	-.37 (.20)	.49 (1.24)
Age	-.03** (.01)	-.02** (.01)	.06** (.01)	.06** (.01)
Education	.00 (.05)	.01 (.05)	-.08 (.09)	-.07 (.09)
Income	-.22** (.05)	-.23** (.05)	-.26** (.08)	-.25** (.08)
Race (White)	.53** (.14)	.55** (.14)	-.05 (.22)	-.07 (.22)
Political Attitudes and Experiences				
Democrat	.28* (.13)	.29* (.13)	.10 (.22)	.08 (.22)
Republican	.15 (.14)	.15 (.14)	.22 (.23)	.25 (.23)
Political Knowledge	.09 (.06)	.09 (.06)	.20 (.15)	.19 (.15)
Political Interest	.07 (.04)	.07 (.04)	.14* (.06)	.14* (.06)
Political Efficacy	.07 (.05)	.07 (.05)	.02 (.08)	.02 (.08)
Previous Campaign Experience	.35** (.07)	.36** (.07)	.10 (.12)	.11 (.12)
Received Encouragement from Nonpolitical Source	1.68** (.11)	1.70** (.14)	-.07 (.30)	-.13 (.31)
Received Encouragement from Political Actor	.78** (.12)	.78** (.12)	.98** (.23)	.98** (.23)
Interested in High Level Political Office			-.22 (.17)	-.24 (.18)
Political Culture				
Political Culture Factor Score	.03 (.05)	.07 (.07)	.22** (.08)	.14 (.10)
Family Responsibilities				
Marital Status (Married)	.22 (.16)	.19 (.23)	.50 (.30)	.18 (.36)
Household Responsibilities Index	.06 (.11)	-.02 (.22)	.24 (.21)	.54 (.32)
Childcare Responsibilities Index	.10 (.16)	.33 (.39)	.45 (.29)	-.80 (.79)
Qualifications				
Self-Perceived Qualifications	.64** (.06)	.50** (.08)	.59** (.12)	.67** (.14)
Ideological Motivations				
Prioritizes Women's Issues when Participating	-.04 (.06)	-.08 (.07)	-.01 (.09)	-.01 (.10)
Interaction Terms				
Political Culture Factor Score * Female		-.08 (.10)		.26 (.17)
Age * Female		-.02 (.01)		-.01 (.02)
Married * Female		.07 (.31)		.75 (.63)
Household Responsibilities * Female		.09 (.25)		-.58 (.44)
Childcare Responsibilities * Female		-.31 (.43)		1.57 (.86)
Self-Perceived Qualifications * Female		.31** (.11)		-.21 (.21)
Prioritizes Women's Issues * Female		.10 (.10)		.00 (.18)
Constant	-2.10** (.45)	-1.98** (.52)	-7.81** (.92)	-8.23** (1.03)
Pseudo-R ²	.49	.49	.27	.28
Percent Correctly Predicted	78	78	85	85
N	2,890	2,890	1,458	1,458

Significance levels: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

which displays the substantive impact of perceived qualifications on the likelihood of considering a political candidacy, indicates that the gender gap narrows considerably and becomes statistically insignificant as women perceive

themselves as increasingly qualified to run for political office. Men's likelihood of considering a candidacy increases from 0.60 to 0.87 as they move along the continuum of perceiving themselves as "not at all qualified"

TABLE 4 Predicted Probabilities of Considering Running for Political Office, by Self-Perceived Qualifications

	Respondent Considers Himself / Herself . . .			
	Not at all Qualified	Somewhat Qualified	Qualified	Very Qualified
Male Respondent	.60	.71	.80	.87
Female Respondent	.30	.49	.69	.83
Gender Gap	30%	22%	11%	4%

Note: Predicted probabilities are based on setting the variables included in the regression (Table 3, column 2) to their respective means. Dummy variables are held constant at their modes.

to “very qualified” for holding an elected position. The impact of self-perceived qualifications on women’s predicted likelihood of considering a run is nearly double that for men. Women gain a 53 percentage point boost when they assess themselves as “very qualified.” Although men have a higher base likelihood of considering a candidacy, women’s perceptions of their qualifications work to lessen the political ambition gender gap. In fact, for women, self-perceived qualifications are the strongest predictor of considering a run for office.¹⁰

One additional gendered finding emerges from the regression results. The consideration of a candidacy depends significantly on the degree to which an individual receives encouragement to run. When we calculate the predicted probabilities of considering running for office, we see that a woman who has never received encouragement to run for office, either from a political actor or a nonpolitical source, has only a 0.20 predicted probability of having considered it. Men’s likelihood is significantly higher (0.32), but still falls far below the mean level of considering a run. When a respondent receives external support to run from both a formal political actor and a nonpolitical source, the likelihood of considering a candidacy more than doubles. Women’s likelihood of considering running increases to 0.75; and men’s predicted

probability of considering a run grows to 0.85.¹¹ Despite the fact that external support for a candidacy boosts both men and women’s likelihood of considering a run for office, 43% of the men, compared to 32% of women received encouragement to run from a party leader, elected official, or political activist (difference significant at $p < .01$).¹² Thus, even if traditional gender socialization does not affect potential candidates’ reliance on external support, these results corroborate the conclusions of scholars who suggest that vestiges of patterns of traditional gender socialization in candidate recruitment hinder the selection of women candidates (Sanbonmatsu 2002a; Niven 1998).

Traditional Gender Socialization and Running for Office

As revealed in Figure 1, the gender gap in political ambition concerns not only the likelihood of considering a candidacy, but also the probability of actually seeking political office. Of the potential candidates who considered running for an elected position, men were one-third more likely than women to turn the consideration into an actual candidacy. This gender gap is smaller than the gap in terms of considering whether to run for office, but this result is largely to be expected, since we know that gender does not predict electoral outcomes. In other words,

¹⁰Several of the background variables included in the regression analysis are significant predictors of whether a respondent considers a run for office, but their substantive effects are smaller than those associated with self-perceived qualifications. White men and women are 12 percentage points more likely than their African American and Latino counterparts to have thought about a candidacy. As women and men’s incomes increase and the opportunity cost of giving up their current careers for an elective position becomes greater, the likelihood of considering a run for office decreases by 7 percentage points. Political experience and familiarity with the electoral environment also spur the likelihood of thinking about a candidacy by 9 percentage points. In each case, though, women are 10–15 percentage points less likely than men to have considered running.

¹¹We confirmed our distinction between “political actors” and “nonpolitical sources” using principal component analysis with varimax rotation.

¹²Political parties, in particular, are often critical in candidate recruitment and nomination, especially at the state legislature and congressional levels (Aldrich 2000; Jewell and Morehouse 2001). Results from the Citizen Political Ambition Study indicate no party differences, either in terms of who was encouraged to run, or who has considered running for office.

the striking gender differences we see in considering a candidacy should begin to dissipate as we move closer to the “gender neutral” end stage of the electoral process. Although the sample size is relatively small (216 men and 105 women sought elective positions), we can assess the extent to which traditional gender socialization influences this second stage of the candidate emergence process.

The third column in Table 3 displays the logistic regression coefficients predicting who launches a candidacy, controlling not only for the baseline correlates of political ambition, but also the traditional gender socialization variables, and the level of office the respondent expressed interest in seeking.¹³ Before proceeding with the analysis of the coefficients, it is important to note two variables that are not included in the multivariate analysis. As was the case with the regression equations presented in Table 1, structural variables did not achieve conventional levels of statistical significance, so we omitted them from our analysis. Less than 4% of the men and women who considered running for office actually sought a statewide or congressional position.

The second type of variable omitted from the logistic regression equations are respondents’ self-perceived chances of winning a race. A growing body of literature on political ambition and strategic politicians indicates that potential candidates are more likely to enter electoral contests when they perceive themselves as likely to win (Black 1972; Jacobson 2000; Rohde 1979; Stone and Maisel 2003). A study geared to uncover the initial decision to run cannot easily tap into this variable. Of the men and women in the sample who actually sought elective positions, 52% of men and 51% of women contend that they would have been “likely” or “very likely” to win their race. Certainly, some respondents are accurately gauging how likely they thought they would be to win at the time they ran, but election results may shade some respondents’ answers to this question. Prospects of winning, therefore, are omitted from the multivariate analysis.

Despite these omitted variables, the logistic regression coefficients in Table 3 shed light on the factors that lead men and women who have considered running for office to decide to enter actual electoral contests. Not only are most of the traditional gender socialization variables and interaction terms statistically insignificant, but sex is also not a statistically significant predictor of whether a potential candidate enters an actual race (see Table 3, col-

umn 4). Based on the logistic regression coefficients, the “average” male respondent has a 0.17 predicted probability of entering a race; female potential candidates’ likelihood is slightly greater than 0.12.

The regression results suggest that the gender gap in political ambition is significantly alleviated by the second step of the process, in large part because so many women weed themselves out by never having considered running. The variables that predict men’s likelihood of entering an electoral contest also predict women’s likelihood, and the magnitude of each variable’s effect is not conditioned by sex. Even in terms of external support, gender differences seem to disappear. When we focus only on those potential candidates who considered a candidacy, we see that receiving encouragement for the idea still exerts an equal and significant impact on women and men, but at this stage, women and men are also equally likely to receive it (60% of men, compared to 57% of women). In short, as we move throughout the candidate-emergence process, the effects of gender seem to dissipate. But far fewer women than men reach this stage of the process.

These findings do not mean that sex is irrelevant at the second stage of candidate emergence. The gender gap in self-perceived qualifications is smaller at this stage, and women are no more likely than men to rely on these perceptions when determining whether to turn the consideration of a candidacy into an actual campaign. But women are still disadvantaged in terms of their self-assessed qualifications. Twenty-six percent of the women who considered running for office deem themselves “very qualified,” compared to 36% of men (difference significant at $p < .01$). When a potential candidate considers himself/herself highly qualified, the likelihood of launching a candidacy increases by more than 63%. This translates into a 10 percentage point increase for men and a 9 percentage point increase for women. Men and women might rely similarly on this factor when determining whether to enter an electoral contest, but men and women potential candidates are not similarly situated in terms of how they perceive their own qualifications.

Conclusion and Implications

The results from the Citizen Political Ambition Study offer evidence that the leading theoretical explanations for women’s continued exclusion from high elective office—incumbency and the eligibility pool—are inadequate. These theories assume that, because the electoral arena is gender neutral, women will, over time, become more likely to run for office, win elective positions, and bring

¹³We do not use a selection model to analyze the data because we are not adding any independent variables at the second stage of the process; a selection model would be unidentified.

gender parity to our electoral institutions. These explanations for women's under-representation do not, however, take into account the selection process by which potential candidates become actual candidates. The evidence uncovered in our study reveals that it is at the candidate emergence phase of the electoral process that critical gender differences exist. Women are far less likely than men to emerge from the pool of eligible candidates and seek elected positions. Thus, even though women who run for office are just as likely as men to emerge victorious, the substantial winnowing process in candidate emergence yields a smaller ratio of women than men. The pool of candidates who run for office, therefore, looks quite different than the eligibility pool of potential candidates with whom we began. This finding reveals the danger of honing in on electoral performance as a gauge for gender neutrality. Aggregate analyses of vote shares and campaign fundraising totals indicate only that the very end of the electoral process may be gender neutral.

The gender gap in political ambition among the pool of eligible candidates can be attributed to two critical aspects of the candidate-selection process. First, women are significantly less likely than men to receive a political source's encouragement to run for office. This difference is very important, since potential candidates are twice as likely to think about running for office when a party leader, elected official, or political activist attempts to recruit them as candidates. Second, women are significantly less likely than men to deem themselves qualified to run for office, yet more likely to rely on their self-perceived qualifications when considering whether to enter the electoral arena. In other words, women, even in the top tier of professional accomplishment, tend not to consider themselves qualified to run for political office. And recruitment patterns—or lack thereof—appear to solidify women's self-perceptions.

It is hardly surprising that among those members of the sample who did run for office, there was no gender disparity in outcomes. The women who enter political races are no different from the men. Virtually all are supported by formal political actors and nearly all deem themselves qualified to run. Together, these findings also suggest that the end stage of the electoral process may not be as "gender neutral" as it is commonly described. After all, if women are more likely than men to doubt their own qualifications, then it stands to reason that women who think they are "qualified" are actually more qualified than men who self-assess this way. And if party leaders and other recruiters are less likely to encourage women to run, then women whom party leaders suggest for candidacy may also be more "qualified" than men they encourage. Thus, the women who fare just as well as their male counterparts

may actually be more qualified than their male counterparts. If women must meet higher standards in their selection to feeder positions for high-level office, the apparent absence of voter bias against women candidates might reflect the higher average quality of women candidates, as compared to men.

Although our findings suggest that some of the older gender socialization mechanisms, such as political culture and family responsibilities, do not seem to serve as critical factors in the early stages of candidate emergence (at least among a pool of potential candidates who have already overcome many socialization barriers by virtue of their professional success), results from the Citizen Political Ambition Study indicate the gendered nature of external support and qualifications. Reliable measures of recruitment activities by political parties and local political organizations do not currently exist. In a similar vein, we have little data to help pinpoint the source of women and men's different beliefs about their own qualifications. Researchers, therefore, may want to begin to turn to these more subtle and nuanced ways that outgrowths of traditional gender socialization continue to exert an impact on women in politics. Further, more detailed investigations pertaining to the gendered nature of professional subcultures could shed light on the different opportunity costs women and men potential candidates must absorb when they consider running for political office. Understanding the origins of these differences is the key to gauging long-term prospects for gender parity in U.S. politics.

Appendix A

The Citizen Political Ambition Study Sample Design and Data Collection

In developing the "candidate eligibility pool," we drew a national sample of women and men from the four professions that are most likely to yield political candidacies for state legislative and congressional offices: law, business, education, and politics. An analysis of the professional occupations of members in the second session of the 107th Congress reveals that law and business are the top two professions for men, followed by education and politics.¹⁴ For women, the numbers are reversed, with education and politics as the leading two professions, followed by business and law. Similar patterns exist among state legislators: men are most likely to be attorneys, followed by business leaders and educators,

¹⁴These figures are drawn from the *Almanac of American Politics* (Barone and Ujifusa 2002).

whereas women are most likely to be teachers or school administrators, followed by business leaders and attorneys (CAWP 2001). Thus, a clear consensus indicates that these are the four most prominent professions for aspiring politicians.¹⁵

In assembling the sample, we created two equal-sized pools of candidates—one female and one male—that held the same professional credentials. Because we wanted to make nuanced statistical comparisons within and between the subgroups of men and women in each profession, we attempted to compile a sample of 900 men and 900 women from each.

Turning specifically to the four subsamples, for lawyers and business leaders, we drew from national directories. We obtained a random sample of 1,800 lawyers from the 2001 edition of the *Martindale Hubble Law Directory*, which provides the addresses and names of practicing attorneys in all law firms across the country. We stratified the total number of lawyers by gender and in proportion to the total number of law firms listed for that state. For business leaders, we randomly selected 900 businessmen and 900 businesswomen from *Dun and Bradstreet's Million Dollar Directory, 2000–2001*, which lists the top executive officers of more than 160,000 public and private companies in the United States. We ensured that men and women held comparable positions.

No national directories exist for our final two categories. To compile a sample of educators, we focused on college professors and administrative officials, and public school teachers and administrators. Turning first to the higher education subsample, we compiled a random selection of 600 colleges and universities from the roughly 4,000 schools listed in *U.S. News and World Report's* “Best Colleges” guide (2000), from which we sampled 300 male and 300 female professors and administrative officials. Because we did not stratify by school size, the college and university portion of the sample yielded a higher number of educators from smaller schools, although there is little reason to expect this to affect levels of political ambition. We then compiled a national sample of 1,200 public school teachers and principals (through an Internet search of public school districts and individual school websites). We acknowledge that this might result in a bias toward schools that have websites, although a 2001 study by the

U.S. Department of Education found that 98% of public schools had internet access and 84% had a Web page (Cattagni and Westat 2001).

Our final eligibility pool profession—“political activists”—represents citizens who work in politics and public policy. We endeavored to survey 900 men and 900 women leaders from political interest groups and national organizations with state and/or local affiliates. The list was then further narrowed so as to strike a partisan and ideological balance. We randomly selected state branch and local chapter executive directors and officers of organizations that focus on the environment, abortion, consumer issues, race relations, civil liberties, taxes, guns, crime, social security, school choice, government reform, and “women’s issues.” This selection technique, which provided a range of activists, yielded 744 men and 656 women as potential candidates.¹⁶

We employed standard mail survey protocol in conducting the study. Potential candidates received an initial letter explaining the study and a copy of the questionnaire. Three days later, they received a follow-up postcard. Two weeks later, we sent another copy of the questionnaire and a follow-up letter. We supplemented this third piece of correspondence with an e-mail message when possible (for roughly one half of the lawyers, educators, and political activists). Four months later, we sent all men and women from whom we did not receive a survey another copy of the questionnaire. The final contact was made the following month, when we sent, via e-mail, a link to an on-line version of the survey. The survey was conducted from August 2001 to July 2002.¹⁷

From the original sample of 6,800, 554 surveys were either undeliverable or returned because the individual was no longer employed in the position. From the 6,246 remaining members of the sample, we received responses from 3,765 individuals (1,969 men and 1,796 women). After taking into account respondents who left the majority of the questionnaire incomplete, we were left with 3,614 completed surveys, a for a usable response rate of 58%, which is higher than that of typical elite sample mail surveys, and substantially greater than the expected response rate of 40% (Johnson, Joslyn, and Reynolds 2001).¹⁸

¹⁶For a more detailed description of the sampling methods, please contact the authors.

¹⁷We uncovered no differences in responses when we compared surveys of individuals who returned the questionnaire before versus after September 11th.

¹⁸Response rates within the four sub-samples were: lawyers—68%; business leaders—45%; educators—61%; political activists—68%. Nonresponse is probably inversely correlated with interest in running for political office, but does not differ across sex.

¹⁵While not focusing on professional backgrounds, some scholars have found different eligibility pools for Democrats and Republicans (e.g., Bond, Fleisher, and Talbert 1997). This literature tends to deal with the distinction between “experienced” and “inexperienced” candidates, with Democrats more receptive than Republicans to candidates lacking electoral experience.

Appendix B

Demographic and Political Profile of the Pool of Potential Candidates

	Overall Sample		Attorneys		Business People		Educators		Activists	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Party Affiliation										
Democrat	55%**	37%	53%	42%	29%	15%	58%	48%	65%	40%
Republican	23**	35	23	36	52	58	21	18	14	22
Independent	18**	24	18	21	17	24	19	29	18	32
Other	3	4	2	2	2	3	3	5	4	7
Race										
White	84	82	81	83	87	82	83	81	87	84
Black	10	9	13	10	6	5	9	8	10	14
Latino/Hispanic	4	6	4	5	5	12	6	7	1	1
Other	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	4	2	1
Level of Education										
No College Degree	8	7	0	0	30	19	0	0	13	13
Bachelor's Degree	21	20	0	0	45	50	12	10	41	34
Graduate Degree	71	73	100	100	25	31	88	90	46	53
Household Income										
Less than \$50,000	11**	6	3	2	7	2	13	6	22	16
\$50,001–\$75,000	12	12	6	3	7	4	15	21	21	23
\$75,001–\$100,000	19	17	13	10	15	12	21	24	25	24
\$100,001–\$200,000	33	35	33	35	32	34	41	40	24	29
More than \$200,000	25**	29	45	50	38	48	10	9	8	8
Mean Age	47 yr.*	50 yr.	41 yr.	47 yr.	48 yr.	51 yr.	49 yr.	50 yr.	51 yr.	51 yr.
N	1,704	1,910	549	594	278	388	444	501	433	427

Note: Sample sizes for each question vary slightly, as some respondents chose not to answer some demographics questions. Levels of significance in chi-square and difference of means tests comparing men and women: *p < .05; **p < .01.

Appendix C

Variable Description*

Variable	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coding
Dependent Variables				
Considered Running for Office	0, 1	.51	.50	Indicates whether respondent ever considered running for local, state, or national level office (1) or not (0).
Sought Elective Office	0, 1	.18	.38	Indicates whether respondent ever sought local, state, or national level office (1) or not (0).
Independent Variables—Traditional Correlates of Ambition				
Sex (Female)	0, 1	.47	.50	Indicates whether respondent is a woman (1) or a man (0).
		.39	.49	
Education	1–6	5.42	1.03	Indicates respondent's highest level of completed education. Ranges from less than high school (1) to graduate degree (6).
		5.48	.99	
Income	1–6	4.58	1.21	Indicates respondent's annual household income. Ranges from under \$25,000 (1) to more than \$200,000 (6).
		4.55	1.21	
Race (White)	0, 1	.83	.38	Indicates whether respondent is white (1) or not (0).
		.82	.38	

(continued on next page)

Appendix C

Variable Description* (*continued*)

Variable	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coding
Democrat	0, 1	.45 <i>.47</i>	.50 <i>.50</i>	Indicates whether respondent self-identifies as a Democrat (1) or not (0).
Republican	0, 1	.30 <i>.29</i>	.36 <i>.45</i>	Indicates whether respondent self-identifies as a Republican (1) or not (0).
Political Knowledge	0–3	2.43 <i>2.62</i>	.98 <i>.82</i>	Indicates how many of respondent's members of Congress (House of Representatives and Senate) he/she can name.
Political Interest	2–8	5.53 <i>6.02</i>	1.66 <i>1.53</i>	Indicates how closely respondent follows local and national news. Ranges from not very closely (2) to very closely (8).
Political Efficacy	1–5	2.79 <i>2.81</i>	1.00 <i>1.02</i>	Indicates whether respondent agrees that government officials pay attention to people like him/her. Ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).
Campaign Experience	0–2	.91 <i>1.12</i>	.73 <i>.71</i>	Indicates respondent's degree of experience working on political campaigns. Ranges from no campaign experience (0) to worked on a campaign and ran for office in school (2).
Encouragement from Political Actor	0, 1	.38 <i>.59</i>	.48 <i>.49</i>	Indicates whether a party official, nonelected activist, or elected official ever encouraged the respondent to run for office.
Encouragement from Nonpolitical Source	0, 1	.60 <i>.85</i>	.49 <i>.36</i>	Indicates whether a friend, family member, spouse, or business colleague ever encouraged the respondent to run for office.
Independent Variables—Traditional Gender Socialization				
Political Culture	–2.3–1.7 <i>1.7</i>	.00 <i>–.03</i>	1.00 <i>1.01</i>	Factor score derived from principal component analysis with varimax rotation. Indicates how “moralistic” respondent's political culture is. ¹
Age	21–88	48.47 <i>48.34</i>	11.02 <i>11.30</i>	Indicates respondent's age.
Marital Status (Married)	0, 1	.75 <i>.76</i>	.44 <i>.43</i>	Indicates whether respondent is married (1) or not (0).
Household Responsibilities Index	0–2	1.00 <i>.99</i>	.61 <i>.57</i>	Indicates whether respondent is responsible for less than half (0), half (1), or the majority (2) of the household tasks.
Childcare Responsibilities Index	0, 1	.11 <i>.10</i>	.32 <i>.30</i>	Indicates whether respondent is responsible for the majority of the child care tasks (1) or not (0; which includes those respondents who have no children).
Self-Perceived Qualifications	1–4	2.52 <i>2.96</i>	1.03 <i>.88</i>	Indicates respondent's level of self-perceived qualifications for holding elective office. Ranges from “not qualified (1) to “very qualified” (4).
Ideological Motivations (Women's Issues)	–3.7–2.7 <i>2.7</i>	.00 <i>–.02</i>	1.00 <i>1.03</i>	Factor score derived from principal component analysis with varimax rotation. Indicates how likely the respondent is to be driven by “women's issues” when deciding whether to participate politically. ²

*Regular type indicates the means and standard deviations of the variables when referring to the entire sample (analyzed to determine the likelihood of considering a run for political office). Italics indicate the means and standard deviations of the variables of the sub-sample of respondents who considered running for political office.

¹Percentage of women in the state legislature and percentage of the statewide vote Gore received in 2000 load on this factor. This measure correlates highly with Elazar's (1984) political culture scheme ($r = .60$; $p < .01$), but is superior to his measures because it is current.

²Abortion, gay rights, the environment, and health care, which are typically deemed “women's issues” (see, for example, Carroll 1994), all loaded on this factor. Crime, the economy, and foreign policy loaded on a separate factor. As might be expected, education did not load on either factor, a probable result of the fact that both political parties have attempted to own the issue and use it in campaigns.

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