

The Relationship between Gender and Campaign Fundraising

Abstract

This research paper analyzes the effect of gender on the 2012 Congressional elections and the fundraising efforts of Congressional members. FEC 2012 Election Data provides the variables, along with control variables from other resources. Individual members of the 2012 Congress serves as my units of analysis, 531 members total. The study attempts to isolate the effects of gender on campaign fundraising efforts for Congressional members. Before factoring in control variables, there is no relationship between gender and campaign fundraising. However, once control variables are added, there is a statistically significant relationship between gender and campaign fundraising in which women are found to raise more than their male counterparts.

Introduction

This study looks at the impact of gender on campaign fundraising. What is the relationship between gender and campaign fundraising? There is still inequality in American politics, and campaign fundraising may play a part in why more women are not prevalent in politics. The motivation of this research question is to understand the issues of inequality between men and women, and hopefully, find a solution to the limited number of women in Congress.

Literature Review

What is the relationship between gender and campaign fundraising in the 2012 Congressional election? Burrell (1985) commences the scholarly research of this topic. Many other political scientists choose to pursue this area of study, each with their own hypothesis or twist on the gender question within politics (251).

The first relationship between this study and those of the literature involves the selected control variables; my study controls for party identification, chamber of Congress, and region. Through examining other studies, there exist a number of other factors that researchers believe play a role in the gender and campaign finance question. Crespin and Deitz's (2010) study controls for party identification as well as female donor networks. They argue that these networks greatly contribute to women's campaigns (581). They also chose to control for the quality of the candidate and incumbency. After controlling for all of these variables, they find that females have a large advantage in campaign fundraising. Werner and Mayer (2007) control for different factors; they control for candidate experience as well as the competitiveness of the Congressional elections in Arizona and Maine (662). Burrell (1985) controls for party identification and incumbency because she believes those two factors to be the most influential in addition to gender. Burrell (1985) writes in regards to incumbency, "Incumbents in recent elections have been

overwhelmingly advantaged in campaign financing, and, needless to say, most incumbents have been men" (253). This is one of the issues with women in politics today; Flock (2012) believes that incumbency seats are the easiest to win. Burrell (1985) addresses the issue of party identification as well (254). Adams and Schreiber (2011) do not control for party identification, but instead for incumbency and those they classified as major candidates. They classify major candidates as those who raise the amounts that follow: "at least \$1,000 in electoral districts less than 50,000 total population; at least \$5,000 in electoral districts between 50,000 and 500,000 total population; at least \$10,000 in electoral districts over 500,000 total population" (Adams and Schreiber 2011, 86). By controlling for all of these variables, I get a more accurate answer for my research question; however, I believe that party identification, chamber, and region play large roles in campaign fundraising.

The ways in which various studies measure financial contributions differs extremely. For my study, FEC 2012 data of total contributions are used rather than PAC contributions or individual donations. Crespin and Deitz (2010) break down their data into total campaign receipts, campaign spending, and PAC contributions (586). Werner and Mayer (2007) only analyze the public funding of elections; their research question is not about how much money a candidate raises, but rather, the effect of gender on the likelihood of the candidate to accept public funding

(661). Burrell (1985) analyzes the overall receipts and expenditures for multiple elections (260). However, Burrell's study (1985) differs from mine because she breakdowns the fundraising into large contributions, PAC contributions, and total contributions (262). I only focus on total contributions to simplify the study. Adams and Schreiber's study (2011) uses two measures: "the sum of direct contributions received and the total money raised by the candidate, which includes direct contributions, public funding received, and independent expenditures" (88).

Sample size is another factor that differentiates this study from others in the literature. My sample size is the entire population of the 2012 Congress. Crespin and Deitz (2010) look at the entirety of Congress and the candidates' campaign fundraising (581). Werner and Mayer (2007) look at congressional elections; however, they only study two states: Arizona and Maine (661). Burrell (1985) also looks at the same sample I selected, but she limits her data to the House of Representatives (251). Adams and Schreiber (2011) look at municipal elections within towns rather than Congressional elections. They write, "Political resources gained at lower levels, such as experience, contacts, fund-raising ability, and name recognition, can help propel women in their legislative careers" (84). By studying local elections, Adams and Schreiber (2011) take a different path to get at the heart of the question of gender and campaign finance. The sample greatly affects the outcome of the

research, and I am specifically interested in the 2012 election versus an overall trend. While trends are important, no study has been conducted on the 2012 election on its own.

A major difference between this study and those of the literature is that mine solely focuses on the 2012 congressional election. Despite the thoroughness of the studies, there are holes in each study including my own. In Crespin and Deitz's study (2010) of Congressional candidates over three elections, the candidates running vary from election to election. This leads to misleading information because a certain female candidate may attract more donations than a woman in another year. Another issue with their study is their control variable of the quality of the candidate. This variable is a difficult one to define, and opinions of its meaning vary from person to person. In Burrell's study (1985) of US House of Representatives campaigns from 1972 to 1982, there is a hole due to her only studying the House rather than the entire Congress. It is possible that women could raise more than men in the Senate but not in the House; including both improves the study's external validity. Within Werner and Mayer's study (2007), there is an information gap because they only look at the candidate's acceptance of public funding. This does not factor in individual and PAC contributions. In Adams and Schreiber's study of seven cities (2011), the time frame varies from city to city. Certain elections may

be more competitive than others due to incumbency factors, district size, or economic conditions that would lead to skewed results.

The conclusions of these studies vary. Crespin and Deitz (2010) find that Democratic women raise more money than the Republican and male counterparts. Werner and Mayer (2007) find that women are more likely to accept public funding than men, but they also find that gender effects are less apparent as experience grows and as more upper level houses are examined. Barbara Burrell (1985) finds that money buys more for women even though they do not raise as much on average; she is unable to explore this phenomenon further because there are not enough women running during her study. Adams and Schreiber (2011) find that women raise just as much as men on the national level (they did not research at the local level), but they cite a reason for this being that not as many women seek political office.

There are many theories attempting to explain why women do or do not raise as much money for their campaigns as men. The reason I examine this research question is because I believe men have a historical and time advantage over women. This goes along with incumbency; Flock (2012) asserts that men have been in office for longer and therefore have an advantage. Another theory as to why women are not as prevalent in Congress and the campaign fundraising scene is because they become involved in politics later in life. Schafer (2012) writes,

“Women often wait until later in their careers and lives to run for office, making it a challenge to rise through the ranks to high office.” This connects with common gender stereotypes; women are expected to start a family and stop pursuing their careers. Flock (2012) believes that women run later because of starting a family and gender roles in our society. Even on women’s issues, the media quotes men more than women politicians; men are seen as the advocates and the people that get hard issues solved in the United States. Flock (2012) cites another theory as to women’s disadvantage; she believes that redistricting is done to favor men. She writes, “10 of 25 Democratic women lawmakers are either forced into a district with another incumbent, or redrawn into a primarily Republican district.” Despite how many women run, there continues to be gender inequality within politics and Congress.

A majority of the literature found that women raise equal if not more than men for campaign fundraising. Anzia and Berry (2011) argue that the reason women raise more is because “only the most talented, hardest working females candidates will succeed in the electoral process” (478). Women that constituents rally behind are the most likely to run, and, therefore, they garner more support than unqualified male candidates. “If voters are prejudiced against women, then a woman must be better than the man she runs against in order to win. Moreover, if women anticipate discrimination by voters, then only the most formidable women will run for

office to begin with" (Anzia and Berry 2011). Due to the historical advantages found by Flock (2012), women are aware that men have a leg up on them for elections; therefore, only those confident and driven run. This drive inspires them to work harder for campaign fundraising and lead them to raise more than their male counterparts.

My study of campaign finance and the 2012 election improves upon the previously cited studies. I research the most recent election which provides the most up-to-date information regarding gender and campaign fundraising. I think the other studies overlook the importance of region in campaign fundraising. I am interested to see if controlling for region affects the results of my study. My study is an improvement upon the other studies because it simplifies the question of the relationship between gender and campaign finance. This study can be easily repeated and thoroughly tested for validity because the data comes from only a few sources (FEC, Rutgers). While those studies of the literature are more in depth than this study, this study focuses on potential trend changes in 2012.

Hypotheses

In a comparison of members of the 112th Congress, those being male will be more likely to have raised a greater amount of money for their 2012 campaign than females. I believe this because men have been more prominent in politics for longer, and they are characterized as strong

leaders. People may be more hesitant to donate large amounts of money to women because they are not as consistently successful in the House and Senate. The independent variable in this study is gender and the dependent variable is the amount of money raised. Control variables include party identification, region, and chamber of Congress.

In a comparison of members of the 112th Congress, females who identify as Republicans are more likely to raise a greater amount of money than males identifying as Democrats (including two Independents, Joe Lieberman and Bernie Sanders). A vast majority of Republicans are from Southern states and have supporters that are the affluent white males that willingly donate money to campaigns; therefore, I believe Republican women will on average raise more money for their campaign than Democratic women. I control the party identification in this study because Republicans have a vast majority in the House. Other control variables include region and chamber of Congress.

In a comparison of members of the 112th Congress, those being female members of the Senate are more likely to raise more money in the 2012 campaign than females in the House. There are only two Senators per state whereas some states can have over fifty representatives in the House, so there is not as much competition with their election cycle. It is commonly known that Senators raise more than Representatives, but 2012

could be a different year, and, therefore, this hypothesis should be tested. The control variables are party identification and region.

In a comparison of members of the 112th Congress, Southern females are more likely to raise more money for their campaign than females from other regions. Similar to the party identification and money raised, I think this relationship occurs because rich and politically active Southerners may be more likely to donate to political campaigns. This relationship may have many other factors involved such as population, competitiveness of the election, amount of candidates in the race, and incumbency. The control variables include party identification and chamber of Congress.

Data, Variables, and Methods

The dataset includes data from the FEC data on campaign fundraising for the 2012 Congressional election cycle. The units of analysis for this study are individuals in the 112th Congress. Gender is an additional variable based on data from the webpage “Women in the 112th Congress.” The variables include: member, state, party, chamber, money raised, and gender. In addition, region is added to the dataset based off of the U.S. Census Bureau's map; the regions are South, West, Mid-West, and Northeast. The Representatives from American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are classified as “Other Region.” It is appropriate for this research question because it provides the total

amount of individual and group donations to the campaign—therefore, the amount shown is the total raised by that specific politician.

Analysis and Results

For the univariate analysis, the descriptive statistics and frequencies of the variables are calculated including gender, party identification, region, chamber of Congress, and money raised. The percentage of males in Congress is 82.3%¹, with females comprising 17.7% of Congress. Males outnumber females in Congress at nearly a 5 to 1 ratio. The descriptive statistics and frequencies for the independent and control variables are analyzed as well. See Chart 1 for results.

The minimum amount of campaign money raised in the 2012 Congressional election is \$2,275 with Senator James Webb of Virginia while the maximum is \$28,159,602 with Senator Scott Brown of Massachusetts. This difference of just over \$28 million shows the vast variance between certain candidates in this study. The mean amount for all of the candidates is \$2,053,026.49 with a standard deviation of \$2,967,712.12. The mean represents what the average candidate in the 2012 Congressional election expects to raise for their campaign funds. See Chart 2.

¹ Data for Senators John McCain and Dennis Kucinich are not included because both have values of \$0 for money raised in their 2012 campaigns.

CHART 1: Frequencies and Means of Independent Variables and Control Variables

	Frequency	Percent
Male	437	82.3
Female	94	17.7
Democrats	246	46.3
Republicans	285	53.7
South	186	35
West	121	22.8
Midwest	120	22.6
Northeast	100	18.8
House	433	81.5
Senate	98	18.5

CHART 2: Descriptive Statistics of Females and Money Raised

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	St. Deviation
Female	531	0	1	.18	.382
\$ Raised	531	2,275	28,159,602	2,053,026.49	2,967,712.12

For the bivariate analysis, the Difference of Means regression analyzes the relationship between gender and the amount of money raised. Difference of Means is used because the independent variable is dummy and the dependent is interval. For male candidates, there is a mean of \$1,936,928.04; a male in the 2012 Congress expects to raise this amount of money for his campaign. Ninety-four females in the 2012 Congress are analyzed and have a mean of \$2,592,760.78. This shows that women on average raised more than their men counterparts in the 2012 election. See Chart 3. These data produce a t-value of -1.536. The test statistic is the difference of means that came to \$655,832.74. The alpha level for this analysis is .05, but the significance is .127; therefore, the difference between the mean amount of funds raised by men and

women is not statistically significant, and we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is no relationship between gender and campaign money raised when control variables are not accounted for. See Chart 4.

CHART 3: Bivariate Analysis of Campaign Funds and Gender

	N	Mean	St. Deviation	St. Error Mean
\$ Raised: Male	437	1,936,928.04	2,703,359.70	129,319.23
\$ Raised: Female	94	2,592,760.78	3,946,208.74	407,020.35

CHART 4: Bivariate Analysis cont'd.

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	St. Error Difference
\$ Raised	1.536	112.479	.127	655,832.74	427,070.29

A linear regression is used for the multivariate analysis because the dependent variable (money raised) is interval, and the independent variable (gender) is a dummy variable. In the linear regression A, the dependent variable is money raised; the independent variables, including control variables, are gender, region, party identification, and chamber of Congress. The null hypothesis is the average amount of money raised by men and the average amount of money raised by women is equal.

In interpreting the coefficients, it is expected that a Democratic Senator from the South raises \$2,537,131 in campaign funds. When controlling for region, party identification, and chamber, women are expected to raise \$730,449 more than men. The significance level of .032

leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis since it is below the alpha level of .05. The adjusted R square is .044; 4.4% of the variation in money raised is explained by region, party identification, and chamber of Congress.

Linear Regression A

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Significance
(Constant)	2,537,131.49	.000***
Female	730,449.36	.032**
West	304,692.36	.380
Midwest	910,945.34	.008***
Northeast	633,653.08	.088*
Other Region	-905,990.27	.541
Republican	223,978.58	.405
House	-1,375,238.95	.000***

Adjusted R Squared (Regression A)

Adjusted R Square
.044

A second linear regression (Regression B) excluding all males occurs in order to analyze the specific differences between women in the 2012 Congress. I am interested to see the relationships between women and the other independent variables in order to better understand the differences in campaign fundraising. In this regression, the dependent variable is money raised, but the independent variables are region, party identification, and chamber of Congress.

For region, the null hypothesis is the money raised by Congressional women in the South is equal to the money raised by Congressional women in other regions. The control variables are party identification and chamber. Southern congresswomen raise less than those in the West,

Midwest, and Northeast. However, only the Midwest difference is statistically significant because it had a significance of .002.

For party identification, the null hypothesis is that the money raised by Democratic women is equal to the money raised by Republican women. The control variables are region and chamber. Democratic women raise on average \$571,5772 more than Republican women. However, this is not statistically significant with a significance of .510.

For chamber of Congress, the null hypothesis is the money raised by women Senators is equal to the money raised by women in the House of Representatives. After controlling for region and party identification, women in the Senate on average raise more than women in the House of Representatives by \$2,480,724. This is statistically significant with a significance level of .015—this leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, concluding that the amount of money raised by women in the Senate and women in the House is not equal.

The adjusted R squared value infers that 12.5% of the variation in money raised by women is due to the control variables.

Linear Regression B

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B) (\$)	Significance
(Constant)	3,855,201.92	.002***
West	458,254.40	.661
Midwest	3,690,101.20	.002***
Northeast	587,349.31	.617
Other Region	-1,082,305.42	.696
Republican	-571,577.35	.510
House	-2,480,724.49	.015***

Adjusted R Squared
.125

Conclusion

My hypothesis that male candidates raise more than female candidates proves to be incorrect and has a statistically significant relationship. Crespin and Deitz (2010) find similar results; Werner and Mayer (2007) also find women to have more money in their campaigns since they are more likely to accept public funding than men. Adams and Schreiber (2011) discover that women do not raise more or less but equal amounts of campaign funds as men. I believe a reason for the variation is the period of change in politics regarding women. As women gain more power and influence, they are able to raise more money. If Burrell were to repeat her experiment with today's Congress, I believe she would find very different results.

My hypothesis that female Republicans raise more than female Democrats is proven incorrect. Female democrats are found to raise more

even though it is not statistically significant. Crespin and Deitz (2012) find the same results.

My hypothesis that female Senate members raise more than female House of Representatives members is correct and statistically significant. My hypothesis that female candidates from Southern states raise more than female candidates from other regions is extremely incorrect. Besides “Other Regions,” Southern women (along with all Congressional members) raise the least amount of money. Within the literature, none of the researchers ask either of these questions.

I believe my results are extremely accurate; however, they can only be applied to the 2012 Congressional election. They are not as generalizable as other studies done because I look at a single election rather than multiple elections. For a future analysis, I would look at more election data. Also, to expand the sample, I would include data from local elections to really get a sense of gender's effect on campaign fundraising. I would also include the data on all candidates rather than just the ones that ended up winning in the 2012 election. In addition to these limitations, another limit is the lack of data on incumbents within my research, which proves to be an extremely important factor in the literature.

The vast amount of studies on women in politics is proof enough that this is a political and social issue that matters. Women have had

equality since the 1920s yet there is still no political equality. By studying campaign fundraising, we investigate one theory as to why women are not as prevalent in politics as men. Because of the findings of this study, we can conclude that other reasons exist that keep women out of office.

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