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IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MONEY: UNDERSTANDING HOW BLACK WOMEN FUND THEIR CAMPAIGNS

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It is no secret that the cost of elections continues to increase in each election cycle. Although we often think about the implications of the cost to run at the congressional level, these effects also have an impact in state-level elections. According to the National Institute on Money in Politics,[1] in 2018, state legislative candidates for lower and upper chambers collectively raised more than one billion dollars. Because state legislatures are the pipeline to congressional office (Palmer and Simon 2003), it is important to understand how and to whom the money flows for candidates to fund their campaigns.

It is important to understand how all state legislative candidates fund their campaigns; however, my research focuses particular attention on Black women. Given the ways in which this

Table 1

Model Estimates of Women's Total Campaign Contributions

| Predictors | Logged Total Receipts | | |
	Estimates	Standard Error	p
(Intercept)	9.97	0.27	**<0.001**
Asian American	0.54	0.49	0.275
Latina	0.32	0.30	0.289
Native American	-0.19	1.10	0.865
White	0.43	0.20	**0.032**
Challenger	-2.45	0.43	**<0.001**
Open Seat	-0.38	0.38	0.310
Independent	0.59	0.27	**0.031**
Republican	0.34	0.19	0.070
Recipient Campaign Finance Score	-0.20	0.09	**0.029**
Upper Chamber	0.57	0.11	**<0.001**
Percentage Women Legislators	0.03	0.01	**0.002**
Ranney Score	0.07	0.15	0.614
Moralistic State Culture	-1.78	0.11	**<0.001**
Traditional State Culture	-2.09	0.15	**<0.001**
Woman Governor	1.70	0.17	**<0.001**
Political Liberalism (Median)	-0.59	0.05	**<0.001**
Asian American x Challenger	-0.32	0.85	0.704
Latino x Challenger	0.31	0.62	0.613
Native American x Challenger	1.97	1.44	0.170
White x Challenger	1.26	0.45	**0.005**
Asian American x Open Seat	1.34	0.93	0.148
Latino x Open Seat	1.58	0.58	**0.007**
Native American x Open Seat	1.36	1.76	0.439
White x Open Seat	0.29	0.40	0.470
Observations	3,788		
R^2	0.156		

group historically has been economically and politically disadvantaged, previous work on their propensity for political engagement suggests that they are more engaged than we might expect (Brown 2014; Farris and Holman 2014; Smooth 2006). Yet, it is because of these historical economic and political disadvantages that rising campaign costs and the increasing percentage of seats held by

different types of donors contribute to Black women's campaigns. Using 2012 and 2014 state legislative candidate data (Scott 2022) and the Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections dataset (Bonica 2016), I matched state legislative candidates to their campaign contribution amounts. I also accounted for state-level factors using the Correlates of State Policy dataset (Jordan

It is important to understand how all state legislative candidates fund their campaigns; however, my research focuses particular attention on Black women.

Black women comprise an interesting puzzle. This is especially the case because there is evidence that campaign finance is a cause for concern among women of color candidates (Sanbonmatsu 2015), and there can be gender disparities in campaign fundraising (Barber, Butler, and Preece 2016).

This article addresses two questions: (1) Where do Black women receive funds, and (2) Are they advantaged or disadvantaged relative to other women in total campaign fundraising? Evidence at the congressional level suggests that the presence of nonwhite candidates in an election can impact who is likely to contribute (Grumbach and Sahn 2020). That is, nonwhite candidates attract nonwhite donors. Although I do not have the fine-grained detail to account for who is contributing, I considered how

and Grossman 2020) in modeling money raised by women candidates across racial groups.[2]

How do Black women's campaign-funding sources compare to other women candidates? As shown in figure 1, the average total contribution to Black women candidates lags behind white, Latina, and Asian American women. However, Black women surpass Native American women candidates. Regarding receipt of PAC contributions, Black women are surpassed only by Latinas. For both Black women and Latina candidates, PAC contributions accounted for about twice the average individual contribution. Of all women candidates, Asian American women received the highest average amount from individual donors and Black women received the least.
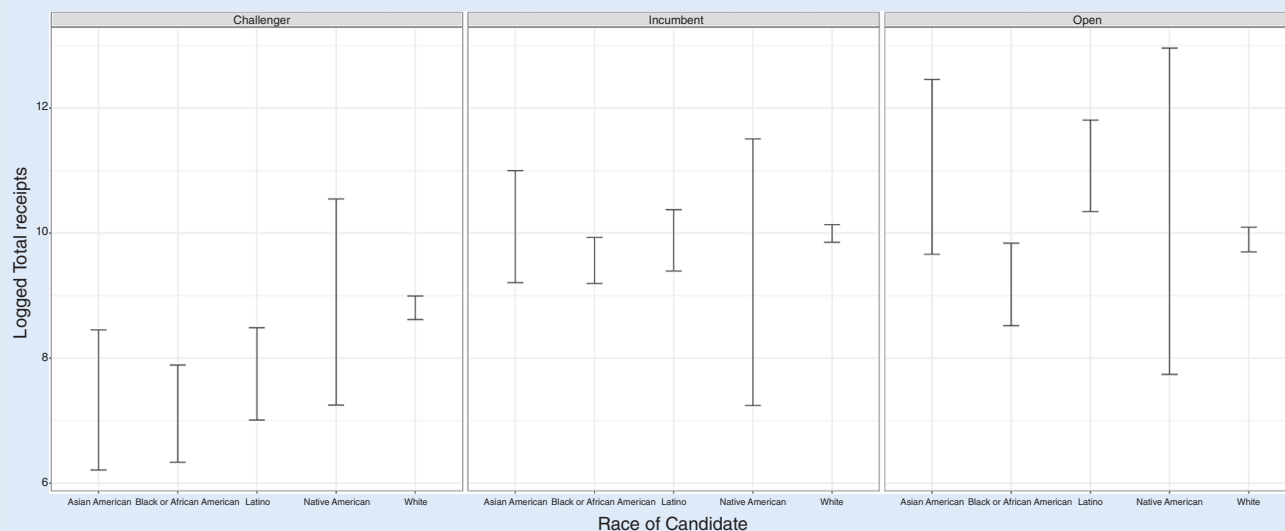
Figure 1
Average Campaign Receipts for Women by Race
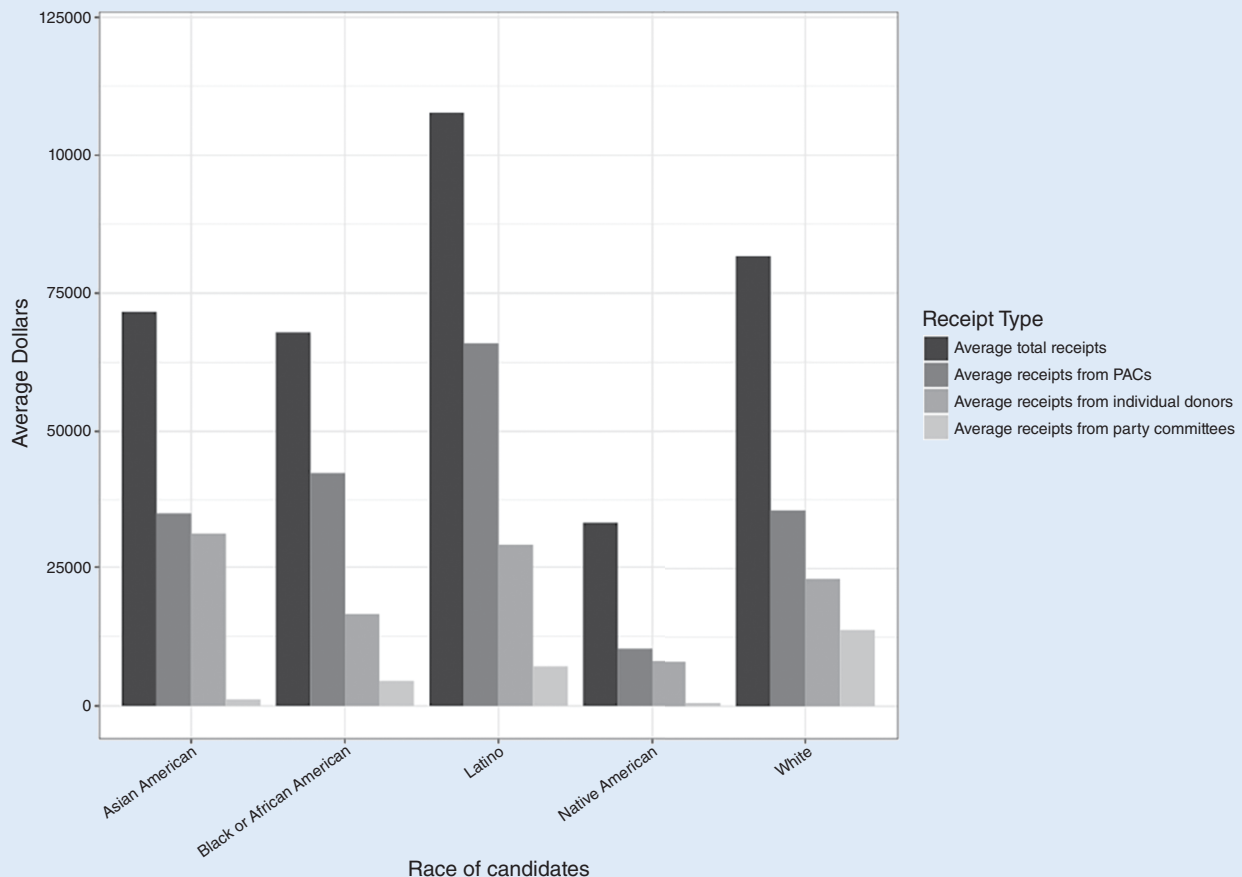
Note: This figure shows average campaign contributions for women by race.

Figure 2
Effect Plot of Women's Total Campaign Receipts by Race and Incumbency Status

Note: This figure shows women's total campaign receipts by race and incumbency status.

In modeling campaign contributions received by women across racial groups in 2012 and 2014, I focused on the total logged contribution amounts as the dependent variable. The main independent variable in the model is an interaction term that includes the race and incumbency status of the women candidates. I controlled for a number of factors, including candidate ideology using the Campaign Finance Score (Bonica 2014); state legislative chamber; percentage of women state legislators; state culture; median policy liberalism (Caughey and Warshaw 2016); and a dichotomous indicator for whether the governor was a woman. I also accounted for the candidate's party as well as party control of state government. Because my main interest was how Black women fared in electoral fundraising in comparison to other women, I used Black women as the baseline for the model.

As shown in figure 2, incumbency has advantages for women's total fundraising. Incumbent Black women are no different from incumbent white, Latina, Asian American, and Native American women in total contributions. As might be expected, women across most racial groups in open-seat elections fared significantly better than challengers in total contributions.[3] However, there are racial differences among women challengers and among women in open-seat elections. For instance, Latinas in open-seat elections are significantly more successful in fundraising than Black and white women. Moreover, Black women challengers raise significantly less money than their white women counterparts.

Overall, when we consider what this means for Black women's ability to fundraise and their overall campaign viability, they are not at a loss when they already have "a seat at the table." Incumbency matters for their campaign-fundraising prospects. However, they do face an uphill battle when fundraising as challengers and even for an open-seat election. Although it is only descriptive, it is telling that Black women lag behind other groups in average contributions, and it is important to note how much PAC money appears to matter for their political prospects. As Black women's numbers in state legislative seats continue to grow, PACs that focus on Black women (e.g., Higher Heights) and

established groups that fund all women (e.g., Emily's List) will continue to play a strong role in Black women's electoral story. However, even these organizations choose who is in a winnable race and therefore have an impact on who is able to run a competitive campaign.

It certainly is the case that women of color are still running in predominantly majority-minority districts at the state level (Shah, Scott, and Juenke 2019), but imagine the possibilities for Black women when they can think beyond majority-minority districts and state legislative seats more generally. At a time when a Black and South Asian woman is the Vice President of the United States, we still have never had a Black woman serve as governor and few Black women are leaders in their state legislature and government. It is clear that money not only matters but also dictates which women are able to assume the mantle of political leadership.

Data Availability Statement

Research documentation and data that support the findings of this study are openly available at the *PS: Political Science & Politics* Dataverse at https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/GFYXHM. ■

NOTES

1. See www.followthemoney.org.
2. I capture the full model in the appendix as table 1 and include figure 2 with model estimates in the main text.
3. The exception is Native American women.

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HERE COMES EVERYBODY: USING A DATA COOPERATIVE TO UNDERSTAND THE NEW DYNAMICS OF REPRESENTATION

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While women and racial and ethnic minorities remain underrepresented throughout the United States, the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of *candidates* in state and federal elections has never been greater. Fifteen years ago, before the election of the country's first Black president, many social scientists and most pundits would have thought today's more diverse political reality was unlikely. As evidence, they could point to the stunning amount of racial resentment held by white voters, including Democrats (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Krupnikov and Piston 2015). They could highlight the historical rarity of nonwhite and women officeholders at the local, state, and federal levels (Clark 2019; Lublin 1997). In particular, they would note that even when racial and ethnic minority individuals held office, it usually was in heavily gerrymandered and geographically segregated majority-minority districts (Lublin 1997), resulting in few opportunities for candidates of color to win in majority-white districts. Given all of this evidence—and in addition to the *Shelby County* vs. *Holder* (2013) decision gutting the 1965 Voting Rights Act—scholars and pundits had every reason to consider Obama's 2008 victory as an outlier (Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012), a lucky break (Lewis-Beck, Tien, and Nadeau 2010), and a precursor to an even greater white-voter backlash against minority candidates (Hajnal 2006).

Around that same time, researchers realized that much of the work on elections was hampered by a difficult data problem. Although scholars of race, ethnicity, and gender representation in the United States had some demographic information about officeholders, we knew little about candidates who lost. Before the social media revolution of the late 2000s, collecting biographical information about candidates required either surveys (Broockman et al. 2013; Maestas et al. 2006), interest-group publications (e.g.,

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officeholders and Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies), or limiting the focus to fewer congressional races, each of which involved tradeoffs of coverage or bias.

Largely due to these difficulties, a large-scale, over-time state legislative dataset of candidate race, ethnicity, and gender characteristics does not exist. In an age when many details of candidates (including "major in college" and "current car") are available on websites such as Project Vote Smart and Ballotpedia, none of these sites provides variables about candidate race, ethnicity, and gender. Although Ballotpedia provides some photographs from their candidate surveys, coding every candidate and every cycle and then matching them with district information is resource consuming. We wanted to have consistent, valid, and publicly available data about the thousands of candidates who run for state government so we could answer questions about elections and representation in the United States, but the data did not exist. In 2012, we embarked on a project that brought together Klarner's state legislative candidate lists (Klarner 2018b; Klarner et al. 2013), interest-group publications, and online sources such as Ballotpedia and Facebook to code the race, ethnicity, and gender of state legislative candidates for office. The evolution of social media, online campaigns, and journalism in the past 15 years has made finding biographical information about election also-rans easier to collect systematically. As a team, we were able to code the candidates from 15 states between 2012 and 2016,[1] but the task was cumbersome and limited.

To expand on these efforts, we created the Candidate Characteristics Cooperative (C3), a hand-coded database of primary- and general-election candidates for state legislative elections held in 2018.[2] We identified 19 methodologically diverse contributors across the country; in return for coding a single state, they were offered access to the complete dataset during an embargo period of 12 months. We provided a list of the primary-election candidates and relevant electoral data and asked contributors to code the race, ethnicity, and gender of the candidates using a rubric that we had developed. Contributors submitted their completed state files to us and we compiled these data into a single, uniform file.

The result of this pilot project was a hand-coded database of all state legislative primary- and general-election candidates from 2018. By covering approximately 14,000 unique major- and minor-party candidates, contributors were able to identify the race and ethnicity of 94% of the candidates when using the techniques described previously. Coding was highly consistent across contributors; 26% of candidates were coded by more than one contributor and, 96% of the time, contributors produced the same race and ethnicity coding despite not coordinating efforts beyond receiving the provided rubric. Given that 22 different researchers (i.e., team leaders, graduate students, and undergraduates) hand-coded candidates, this degree of correspondence indicates that the hand-coding method produces consistent, replicable results. The C3 dataset also has similarly complete coding of candidate gender as well as supplemental information on the ancestry and national origin, occupation, and religion of many candidates (Shah, Juenke, Fraga 2022).

During the past eight years, we have learned much about elections involving racial and ethnic minority and women candidates. First, contrary to the reasonable expectations of many race scholars, we found that Black and Latina/o candidates did well when they were on state legislative ballots (Juenke 2014; Shah