

**PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AND CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS IN  
CONGRESSIONAL PRIMARIES**

by

NATHAN A. BURROUGHS

(Under the Direction of Paul-Henri Gurian)

**ABSTRACT**

In this dissertation I examine the influence of party organizations on candidates in congressional primaries. I concentrate on the magnitude of party influence and the differential effect of parties with respect to candidate background. Specifically, I test the degree to which candidates with non-political credentials for office (self-financers, celebrities, and members of political families) are more or less advantaged by the presence of institutionally weak parties. I also test hypotheses related to the effect of party institutionalization on candidates, political organizations, donors, and primary voters. Parties are analyzed both as autonomous actors and as rules-bearing structures.

An analysis of commonly employed measures of party institutionalization suggests that there is no one indicator of party “strength,” and raises questions about the use of surveys of executive directors and chairs of state parties. Instead, I employ a number of independent indicators of party institutionalization.

Statistical analysis suggests that party institutionalization has only a modest effect on the process of candidate emergence, with a limited ability to reduce the number of primary candidates or encourage elected officials to run for the House. Environmental factors such as the

presence of an incumbent and the partisan predisposition of the district play a dominant role. Consistent with previous work, candidates with experience in elected office are advantaged in fund-raising and winning votes. However, party organizations are active in congressional primaries, openly supporting candidates in the primary more often than any other organizational actor. Candidates who have received party support have more success in earning donations and votes than other candidates.

Democratic and Republican primary dynamics display substantial differences. The two parties are more likely to attract candidates that resemble their party's voter base, and there are distinctions in the influence of candidate background and party institutionalization on fund-raising and organizational support. Strong Democratic institutions appear to advantage elected officials and long-time party activists, while stronger Republican parties advantage candidates with elite backgrounds.

INDEX WORDS: congressional elections, party organizations, candidate emergence, primaries, candidate fund-raising, candidate characteristics, candidate quality

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## **DEDICATION**

For Danielle, who makes everything seem possible.

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## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ever since V. O. Key differentiated among the basic functions of the party, attention has been concentrated principally on its role in government and the electorate. Party as organization has been comparatively neglected. The discussion surrounding organizational capacity has usually centered on its supposed decline since the heyday of the urban machines or the New Deal (Ware 1985), countered by arguments that party organizations are more professional and competent than ever (Cotter et al. 1984, Herrnson 1989). Most of the literature to date is focused primarily on the organizational capacity of parties, with little attention paid to the political consequences of weak party organizations.

At least part of the reason for the dearth of work on party organizations is the difficulty in doing empirical research: there are substantial data available to capture legislative or voting behavior, but there is relatively little available on organizational strength. But another reason for the lack of interest may simply be that strong party organizations are no longer perceived as crucial to the political process. If party organizational structure has no obvious normative consequences, it might not matter how strong they are.

The prevailing depiction of parties is that they are little more than shells, giving labels to a political coalition dominated by office-seekers (Schlesinger 1985). Some research suggests that with changes in campaign technologies, direct primaries, and the breakdown of cohesive social and ethnic groups, permanent party organizations have lost most of their relevance in the

electoral process (Ware 1985). The roles once served by the political bosses are now filled by campaign consultants, the media, the bureaucracy, and interest groups, while the remaining party organizations are dominated by office-seekers and their dependents. (Schlesinger 1985)

According to this depiction of parties, the United States is now in an age of entrepreneurial, candidate-centered politics. Office-seekers are self-starters rather than “gentlemen” motivated by noblesse oblige or ward captains awaiting the day the boss decides it is “their turn” (Aldrich 1995, Reichley 1992).

There does exist a competing description of political party strength. Rather than a story of uninterrupted decline, parties have remained strong and in some cases become stronger. Herrnson (1986) notes the greater professionalism and activity of the national parties, while Bruce et al. (1991) has discussed the effects of presidential campaigns in improving coordination between the national and local parties. The increasingly ideological character of political parties may act to draw in new activists who over time revitalize party organizations even as they become socialized by experience into political professionals. It is also helpful to note that the two major parties have lost none of their dominance in national elections, and have even strengthened their hold over the electorate.

This debate may be without normative consequences — does it really matter whether parties are strong or not? What are the consequences to the political system at large of party organizational strength? Advocates of strong parties, while accepting the party-decline/candidate-centered thesis, have argued that political accountability and effective government are impossible without the party linkage (Schattschneider 1960, APSA 1950). Healthy democracies, according to Schattschneider and others, require healthy parties. But does democracy really require party *organizations*? Might these concerns be met by candidate-

centered elections and cohesive legislative parties with little or no autonomous organization (Aldrich 1985)? In fact, some have argued that political parties are not even necessary for legislative performance and only marginally important to proper electoral functioning (Krehbiel 1992).

Thus, there are several fundamental questions about party organizations. The first is empirical: how much influence does the political party as an organization have on the political process? The second is normative: do party organizations have either a positive or negative impact on democratic procedures, and if so, what kind of organizations? The Progressives generally regarded parties as “bad”, while the American Political Science Association (APSA) report viewed them as “good.” Does the difference in attitudes rely on the kind of party of which we are speaking?

To address these questions I will focus on the party as an electoral organization. The essential function of all political parties is electing its candidates to office, whether for its own sake or as an instrument to policy goals. I will leave aside the power that party organizations may have over elected officials, or vice versa, since that issue is more relevant to legislative function. While there is certainly a relationship between an office-holder’s behavior in the legislature and his prospects for re-election (for example, if he routinely votes with the other party), generally speaking elected officials are loyally supported by the local and state party apparatus. Therefore, to measure the electoral influence of a party organization is to measure how often its nominees are successful and how much of that success is attributable to the party. This analysis is complicated, however, by the existence of the direct primary in the United States. Unlike in the American past or contemporary democracies in other nations, party organizations do not have *de jure* control over the nomination process. The use of primaries introduces a “second front” for

party organizations: they must not only be concerned about their ability to win general elections, but also primaries. Any discussion of party organizations that leaves out the latter element is incomplete.

First under consideration is the empirical question of party influence. Local U.S. parties have usually had one of two basic forms since the nineteenth century: the machine and the entrepreneurial party. The machine has been characterized as one in which the nomination process is controlled by political bosses (not necessarily holding any elected office). Even where there is a direct primary, the organization's candidates are almost always successful. In the general election, most of the campaign resources are in the employ of the machine and are used to the benefit of all its candidates running as a ticket. The entrepreneurial system, in contrast, is characterized by weak or non-existent regular organizations. Candidates and political factions build support on an ad hoc basis from election to election. Primary races are often contested, and in such cases are very similar to general elections. From an empirical perspective, these two types of party organization are on opposite poles of the candidate-organization continuum (Reichley 1992, Epstein 1986).

But the machine and entrepreneurial models are obviously ideal types; organizational strength may be better represented as a continuum rather than a dichotomy. While conventional wisdom now argues that the machines are "dead" and that contemporary electoral politics is now candidate-centered, this view has been challenged by Cotter, et al. (1984) and Herrnson (1986), who point to greater professionalism in party committees. Party organizations may still wield some influence in the electoral process. Most of the old-style machines are now defunct, but party organizations often act as service organizations for candidates already selected in the

primary. Party committees take a hands-off approach in the nomination contest under this strategy, but are very involved in general elections.

The entrepreneurial model (Aldrich 1992, Schlesinger 1985) assumes that candidates and institutional actors exist in a virtual political vacuum, with either the candidates or interest groups in the dominant position and parties as largely marginalized. But there is still considerable room for party influence in the early stages of the nomination process. Parties could act as umbrellas for other electoral agents rather than as a competitor for influence. They may also provide useful avenues for access for potential office-seekers. Party organizations could be more broadly defined: interest groups and activists that are technically independent but apparently permanent members of the electoral coalition would be included (Bibby 1999). This coordination, or “network,” model of party influence exists between the two extremes of the machine and the entrepreneurial system, leaving the party organizational environment as relevant though no longer dominant in the nomination process.

Even with a clearer picture of the influence of party organizations, the problem of normative weight remains to be addressed. One potentially fruitful area of inquiry is candidate emergence. Rather than embracing the strictly American political context of machine versus candidate, Duverger (1962) distinguishes between mass-membership and caucus-cadre systems largely on the basis of internal structure. Where the caucus-cadre system is loosely organized and dominated by constitutionally elected officials, the mass-membership party is controlled by leaders who emerge from the rank and file. Duverger argued that mass-membership parties have a pronounced advantage in electoral contests, but he also notes the vital difference in the process of candidate recruitment. Caucus-cadre systems tend to nominate candidates who are traditional social elites, *i.e.* the wealthy, famous, and politically connected. Mass-membership systems

draw instead from a broader pool of potential candidates. Similarly, Panebianco (1988) argues that institutionalized parties tend to have internal hierarchies that are independent of prevailing social stratification. In other words, strong parties tend to promote officeholders from within, while weak parties are more likely to nominate candidates with social prestige — prestige gained *outside* the formal party structure. From the perspective of candidate emergence, therefore, there may be a serious normative implication to the structure of party organization if different organizational structures tend to advantage different sorts of candidates, particularly if those advantages should be morally irrelevant according to democratic theory.

Duverger and Panebianco deliberately excluded the United States party structure from their analyses as a major outlier, which may have been too hasty. Duverger does suggest that U.S. political parties have always possessed a caucus-cadre form. This proposition is a contestable one. Structurally speaking, machine and mass-membership (or “branch”) systems seem to share similarities, as do caucus-cadre and entrepreneurial party systems. The party machine, like the mass membership system, is broadly participative and actively engages in the recruitment of party workers, although the incentives they provide are quite different: machines rely on material benefits, while mass parties rely on solidary and purposive benefits. Both mass-membership and machine parties are labor-intensive organizations with clear internal hierarchies of leadership, which are nonetheless quite open to newcomers, provided they demonstrate political skill. They are also both characterized by purposes beyond that of controlling the legislature, be it securing patronage or advocating an ideology. While the branch and machine parties differ in their political motivations (material vs. ideological rewards), the key element that machine and branch parties have in common is that they exist outside of the legislature and are largely independent of it. In fact, they tend to dominate the candidates they support, in part

because they possess a monopoly on campaign resources and can “make” a candidate. Furthermore, even if there are crucial differences between machine and branch parties, the decline of machines and the development of activist-dominated parties mean that U.S. parties resemble the mass-membership form even more closely.

The similarities between caucus-cadre parties and the candidate-centered party are equally striking. Caucus-cadre systems, like the entrepreneurial parties, are essentially teams of officeholders focused on election. These sorts of parties tend to be decentralized and organizationally weak, and to the extent that substantial organizations do exist, they tend to be outgrowths of these elites’ own supporters. These institutions are very dependent on, and often nearly adjuncts of, an elected official. Duverger argues that the candidate-centered nature of caucus-cadre systems tends to disproportionately benefit traditional social elites, as the leadership is comprised of elected officials, campaign contributors, and what he describes as “experts” (While unclear, he may be referring to the early twentieth-century equivalent of campaign consultants). Furthermore, the political primary in the United States tends to further advantage those who are already wealthy and well-connected: candidates must be viable *before* they seek the party’s nomination.

If this parallel between caucus-cadre and entrepreneurial parties holds, then the entrepreneurial model would be exposed to a serious objection from the perspective of democratic theory. While there is little evidence that officeholders with elite backgrounds tend to vote against the interests of their constituencies, the mere fact that successful candidates tend to be from privileged backgrounds points to potential biases in the electoral system. If party organizational structure influences primary and general election results in a differential way depending on the sociodemographic or other characteristics of a candidate, then candidates with

those characteristics are being discriminated against (or for) in the electoral process. A mass-membership or machine party could be more open to political outsiders who have nothing to contribute other than campaigning ability and a commitment to the party's issues. According to Duverger and Panebianco, a caucus-cadre system disadvantages candidates without wealth and celebrity, and by extension the entrepreneurial system could be subject to the same critique. This phenomenon would be even stronger under a capital-intensive political process like that of the contemporary American republic (Epstein 1986).

Thus, the institutional structure of political parties may have a deleterious impact on the conditions of fair democratic participation. The democratic ideal of "one man, one vote" suggests that all citizens should have an equal say in democratic decision-making. In elections, candidates should be judged on the basis of political criteria: issue positions, competence, experience, or, in a primary, loyalty to the party. Voters should have a fair chance to decide which candidate they prefer without being constrained by other political actors or institutions that impose *irrelevant criteria on candidate viability*. As Rawls has argued, just political institutions should not reinforce morally arbitrary social inequalities (like wealth or inherited prestige); as such, neither should party nominating structures. While it may or may not be true that party leaders find it convenient to nominate well-known or wealthy candidates, or that voters may prefer such candidates by way of cue-taking or social attribution, the design of political institutions should certainly not *encourage* such tendencies.

A good analogy to the general problem of institutional neutrality between candidates is May's theorem (1952). His neutrality condition states that every proposal is assumed to have an equal opportunity to be selected. As Riker (1982) and others have pointed out, the rules for counting votes in elections have a major effect on who wins, irrespective of whom the voters

might actually prefer. Therefore, the method of casting and counting votes during an election must be carefully considered to guarantee democratic fairness as much as possible. The same logic holds for party organizations in their capacity as recruitment and electoral organizations. Along similar lines, one could argue that candidates should all have something like an equal footing. This argument does not suggest that a Patrick Buchanan should have an equal *probability* of election as an Al Gore, only that the rules of the political game should not unfairly discriminate between the two.

Now, it could be argued that each institution in a constitutional democracy need not be democratic. The Supreme Court, for example, is designed specifically to limit the power of political majorities. I believe that the force of this objection is misplaced in the specific case of candidate emergence. In a republic, where elected officials make most of the critical policy decisions, it is especially important that the process of candidate emergence is an egalitarian one. A system like the Roman Republic, in which voters were given the opportunity to select from among the scions of noble houses, would scarcely deserve the appellation “democracy,” despite the use of elections. Even though parties are constrained by the requirement of a direct primary, political parties still have an influence on the electoral process through the process of candidate emergence and recruitment. Given his observations on the differences in recruitment patterns between caucus-cadre and mass membership parties, Duverger’s and Panebianco’s analyses suggest that a candidate’s fortunes are at least partly determined by the party organizational environment in which he or she is competing. The implicit argument is that caucus-cadre systems help elite candidates, while mass-membership systems help non-elite candidates (or at least help them more than the alternative). To the extent that entrepreneurial

American political parties resemble caucus-cadre systems, elite candidates should benefit as a result, with the opposite holding true for machines resembling the mass-membership parties.

Here the normative and empirical questions are integrated into one concern: does the organizational context of an electoral contest distort the final results? If so, then organizational structure should be analyzed as carefully as ballot procedures and legislative rules have been, for much the same reason. To address these questions, in this dissertation I test a number of hypotheses relating to the interrelationship of party organization and candidate characteristics in congressional primaries. After reviewing the relevant literature on congressional elections and party organization (Chapter 2), I develop measures of party organizational strength and candidate background (Chapter 3). In Chapter 4, I conduct a basic descriptive analysis of the types of candidates who ran for the U.S. House between 1980 and 1998, with specific attention paid to political party and seat status. In Chapters 3-8, I perform a more detailed analysis of the effect of party organization and candidate background on each stage of the primary election process: candidate emergence, the campaign, and electoral outcomes. Each chapter will test a specific hypothesis, listed below:

#### Chapter 4: Candidate Emergence - Negative Recruitment

Hypothesis 1: Fewer candidates emerge in congressional races where stronger party organizations are present.

#### Chapter 5: Candidate Emergence – Positive Recruitment

Hypothesis 2: Stronger party organizations will increase the likelihood of the entry of a candidate with experience in elected office.

#### Chapter 6a: The Campaign – Organizational Support

Hypothesis 3: Parties intervene in congressional primaries in support of candidates, and are more likely to support candidates with experience in elected office than other candidates.

#### Chapter 6b: The Campaign - Fundraising

Hypothesis 4: Experience in elected office and support from party organizations will increase a candidate's campaign fundraising.

#### Chapter 7: Electoral Outcomes - Simple Model

Hypothesis 5: Experience in elected office and support from party organizations will increase a candidate's share of the primary vote.

#### Chapter 8: Electoral Outcomes – Combined Effects

Hypothesis 6: The indirect and direct effects of party organizational strength on primary vote share are greater for candidates with elective and political experience than for candidates with elite backgrounds.

The effects of party are divided into two different elements. First, party organizations are conceived of as actors, as discrete entities competing for influence in the electoral process. Second, party organizations are conceived of as structures: institutions whose rules and processes

shape the process of political competition. The influence of parties as actors is tested under hypotheses 3, 4, 5, and 6; the effect of party as structure is examined in hypotheses 1, 2, 4, and 6. Each hypothesis reflects the institutional model of party organizations, as opposed to the entrepreneurial model. If elite candidates were more likely to receive political support, funds, and votes in strong-party states, then the entrepreneurial model would receive support. I will discuss these models of party organization more thoroughly in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **BACKGROUND**

By analyzing the role of party organization in the electoral process, I am uniting two distinct areas of research: party organization and congressional elections. In this chapter I will review the relevant research in each area. I will begin by discussing the internal institutional capacity of parties by defining the primary components of party organizational strength, exploring which factors create strong organizations, and assessing how party strength has been evaluated at the local, state, and national level. The other key element of party organization is its external electoral role, namely the effects of party strength on vote choice, fund-raising, and candidate recruitment.

The second section is a review of the congressional elections literature. Research has focused largely on the determinants of electoral outcomes, whether at the level of individual races or as a national aggregate of all contests. After reviewing this literature, I will focus on the effects of campaign quality and campaign finance, both on vote choice and on each other.

#### Party Organizations

Before measuring the strength of party organizations, a better understanding of what constitutes “strength” is necessary. Party organizational strength can be defined by either institutional resources or external perception. The work of Cotter and colleagues (Cotter, Gibson et al. 1984) thoroughly describes the features of party organization by means of a survey of party

leaders. Their definition of party organization is limited to formal party institutions, including only regular party committees at the state, national, and local level. They argue that the many features of organizational strength can be grouped into two basic factors: bureaucratic complexity and programmatic capacity. Bureaucratic complexity includes headquarters accessibility, division of labor, party budget, and professionalized leadership. Programmatic Capacity includes institutional support (fund-raising, electoral mobilization, polling, issue leadership, and newsletters) and candidate-directed activity (contributions, services, recruitment, convention delegations, and endorsements). In general, bureaucratic complexity measures the internal structure of a party, while programmatic capacity describes its relationship with external actors.

Another view of party organizational strength is that of Mayhew (Mayhew 1986), who relies on historical records, political science research and journalistic accounts to develop a measure of traditional party organizational strength (TPO). He defines “traditional party organizations” as those which possess autonomy, have a long duration, a hierarchical structure, a focus on nomination contests, and rely primarily on material benefits. States are ranked on a five-point scale based on the presence of TPOs in the state. These measurements are not restricted to urban machines but also include party organizations outside municipal areas. Mayhew notes the crucial importance of party factionalism: a state could on the surface be considered to have strong parties if it can call upon legions of party workers, but this apparent strength could be illusory if elements of the party were mobilized against one another. While Mayhew’s study lacks the precision of Cotter’s (the former’s ranking seems somewhat impressionistic), it does present a useful measure of the tradition of party organization in a given state, as well as provide a benchmark of party organizational strength during the 1960’s.

What neither the Cotter or Mayhew measurements include is party electoral success. In one-party states there is no need for strong party organizations, while in other states fierce competition between the two major parties does not necessarily lead to strong party organizations as other institutional actors (such as strong candidates) may make their presence unnecessary. This view has been criticized by Jewell and Morehouse (Jewell and Morehouse 2001), who argue that competitiveness is an important indicator of party strength.

The next issue to be considered is the causes of party organizational strength (POS). Parties appear largely dependent on the cultural and legal environment as well as other political actors. Cotter et al. (Cotter, Gibson et al. 1984) suggest that POS is a product of the party's legal status in a state, electoral success, interparty competition (Olson 1978), extra-party organizational actors, and party factors (past strength, strength of other units, integration, and the organizational attitude of elites). Other potential influences on POS are the class orientation of the state and the degree of cultural parochialism (Beck 1974), as well as the duration and form of incentives available to the party (Mayhew 1986).

Another source of organizational strength is the level of cooperation between the national, state, and local levels. The evidence of integration is mixed. The national party may influence the states (Jewell and Olson 1988, Jewell and Morehouse 2001), with the Republican Party in particular providing substantial financial support (Herrnson 1988). Alternatively, some researchers have suggested that state parties determine the level of cooperation (Cotter, Gibson et al. 1984, Huckshorn 1976). Local parties are largely independent of state parties (Gibson et al. 1985), but in presidential campaigns, contact with the national party organizations is a good predictor of local political activity (Beck et al. 1997). Political parties also have fairly strong connections with major interest groups, which, rather than acting as strategic competitors, exist

as part of a larger party network (Bibby 1999, Skinner 2007), although this may be more true for Democrats than Republicans (Herrnson 1988).

A possible contributor to party weakness is factionalism between professionals, who are focused on winning elections, and purists pushing an ideological agenda. Party organizations have an increasingly ideological character (Ware 1992), and the influx of issue-oriented amateurs can limit the flexibility of the leadership and result in electoral defeats (Bruce et al., Roemer 2001, Wilson 1962). However, this potential for conflict has apparently not manifested, in part because the leadership is also fairly ideological (Bruce et al. 1991), because amateurs tend to become professionalized over time and adopt the same norms of electability (Dodson 1990, Stone and Abramowitz 1983), and because primary voters are no more ideological than the electorate as a whole (Norrande 1989). The reality seems to be that most party activists and professionals adopt a utility maximization strategy that factors in both electability and ideology (Stone et al. 1992) and that there is no clear line between professionals and purists (Nakamura 1980). In fact, factional disputes within parties are more often based on personalities than issue disputes (Stone, Rappaport et al. 1992).

Given these depictions of what party organizational strength means and how to measure it, how much strength do parties really possess? Two positions exist on this issue: proponents of the first argue that party organizations have been in steep decline for decades, while adherents to the second emphasize continuity in party strength. While the evidence is inconclusive at the local and state level, national parties appear to be unprecedentedly strong.

The idea that party organizations at the state and local levels are in long-term decline has become somewhat of a cliché (Epstein 1986, Reichley 1992, Ware 1985). Local party organizations in general and the urban machines in particular are supposed to have collapsed

since the New Deal. A host of factors, including new technologies (Ware 1985, Herrnson 1988), the decline of traditional neighborhoods (Herrnson 1988), and the redistricting reforms of the 1960's (Carson et al. 2007), among others, have all been held responsible for the decline of local parties. This depiction of organizational disintegration has been challenged by Gibson et al. (1985), and Cotter et al. (1989), as surveys of county party chairs indicate that local parties are no less active in elections and have no fewer organizational positions filled than in the 1960s. In fact, their research indicates that local parties have strengthened since 1964. Even though local parties are relatively weak in bureaucratic terms, their programmatic activity has not been inhibited (Cotter et al. 1984, Gibson et al. 1985). Further research along these lines indicates that no decline occurred during the 1980s (Gibson et al. 1989), and organizational strength witnessed if anything a slight increase during the 1990s (Freundreis and Gitelson 1999). However, this research relies heavily on the retrospective reflection of party leaders and is therefore potentially unreliable. In addition, the starting point of the analysis is the 1960s, when there is some evidence that the collapse of party organizational capacity came a generation earlier (Burnham 1970). While far weaker than at their Gilded Age apex, local party organizations may have averted serious deterioration since the 1960s, or perhaps even strengthened. A survey of congressional candidates by Paul Herrnson (1988) indicated that local parties play an important role in recruitment and voter turnout efforts. In similar work by Maisel and Stone (2001), local parties demonstrated an influence over recruitment and party contacting.

If there is little evidence of the “hollowing out” of local party organizations in the last half-century, what about state party committees? Again, historically grounded conventional wisdom seems at odds with contemporary empirical evidence. Traditionally, state parties have been very weak (Mayhew 1986, Reichley 1992). Gibson et al. (1983), after a survey of state

party leaders, found little evidence for a decline since the 1960s. Rather, state parties are becoming increasingly professionalized and technologically proficient (Goodhart 1999), and congressional candidates are reliant on these organizations (Jewell and Olson 1988). However, while state parties' organizational capacity might be stronger than a generation ago (Jewell and Olson 1988), parties' net influence on the political process is probably less, given the presence of new institutional rivals.

While the relevance of state and local party committees is in dispute, there is a near-consensus on the revolutionary change in the national party committees. From weak and ineffectual organizations, they have experienced an organizational renaissance over the last several decades. The changing nature of presidential campaigns, as the role of local and state parties have diminished and the influence of national parties have been enhanced, has played a major role in the growth of national party committees. Ample evidence shows that the national committees and congressional campaign committees are also very active in House and Senate elections, through direct contributions, coordinated and independent expenditures, recruitment, and campaign services like polling, campaign management, fundraising, and voter mobilization (Herrnson 1986, 1988, 1989, Jacobson 2001). Transfers to party committees by incumbents have also substantially increased (Larson 2004).

While there is an inherent tension between the desires of the parties to maximize their number of seats in Congress and the desire of incumbents to guarantee their own individual success (Jacobson 1985), parties do seem to give support to candidates based on their electoral marginality (Damore and Hansford 1999, Nokken 2003). Overall, the influence of national parties is apparently growing rapidly (Herrnson and Dwyre 1999).

Any judgments about POS should be considered in light of the existence of two very different parties. Strength in one may be offset in another. In fact, a major difference in organizational strength and orientation appears to exist between the two parties. Democrats tend to focus on rule compliance and turnout, while the Republicans emphasize the provision of services to candidates, fund-raising, and the maintenance of the party organization (Huckshorn et al. 1986, Goodhart 1999). The two parties are increasingly competitive (Jewell and Olson 1988, Cotter et al. 1984, Frendreis and Gitelson 1999), but Republicans appear to have a major advantage in organizational capacity. At the local level (Cotter et al. 1984, Frendreis et al. 1990), the state level (Cotter et al. 1984, Gibson et al. 1983, Jewell and Olson 1988) and the national level (Jacobson 1985, Herrnson 1986, 1988, 1989 and 1992), Republicans demonstrate superior resources, greater professionalization, and more strategic behavior. Republican candidates have rated their party committees as much more effective and influential than have Democrats (Herrnson 1988).

But does party organizational strength (or the lack of it) have any measurable consequences? For example, does the apparent Republican organizational advantage translate into electoral success? The answer depends on what role POS plays in electoral contests, given political context. While both parties are certainly concerned with supporting candidates in marginal seats (Jacobson 1985, Herrnson 1989, Damore 1999), the evidence that party activity has a direct effect on voting is mixed. There is only limited support for the argument that POS has a direct effect on electoral outcomes (Frendreis et al. 1990). They can function in a supporting role, however. National committee involvement can shape the tone of a campaign by partly nationalizing it (Herrnson 1999) and can also improve turnout (Weilhower and Lockerbie

1994, Hill and Leighley 1993). Organizational strength can improve a party's long-term competitiveness (Patterson and Caldeira 1984).

Party weakness through extreme factionalism or an inability to limit internal disputes may also damage general election prospects. The “divisive primaries” hypothesis claims that a close contest in the nomination phase can result in worse performance in the general election through alienation of activists and voters. While there is substantial support for the divisive primary hypothesis in presidential contests (Kenney and Rice 87, Atkeson 98, Southwell 1986, Lengle 1980, Stone 1986), results at other levels are mixed. Research has demonstrated evidence both for (Kenney and Rice 1984, Bernstein 1977) and against (Kenney 1988, Hacker 1965) divisive primary effects. Neither Born (1981) nor Kenney (1988) found a general election carryover effect from the contested primaries for U.S. House contests, once candidate quality, scandal, and reciprocal candidate entry effects were controlled for. While hurting incumbents, contested primaries may help challengers (Alvarez et al. 1995). Romero (2003) did find a divisive primary effect for incumbents (as did Born 1981) with a model pooling results from multiple election cycles and including a measure for challenger expenditures. Democrats appear more prone to divisive primaries due to demographic diversity (Herrnson and Gimpel 1995). Finally, Lazarus (2005) suggests that the effects of divisive primaries are illusory, since seats that are likely to be competitive are more likely to attract more candidates, and hence more contested primaries.

Rather than directly shaping the results, party organizations may work indirectly through campaign recruitment (Freundreis et al. 1990). Assuming that the primary goal of party organizations is winning elections, a rational strategy for parties is to encourage candidates with the best chance to win, and then secure their nomination. At the minimum, parties should try to

exclude potentially disastrous candidates. Considerable evidence demonstrates that parties indeed pursue such a strategy. Over one-third of local parties engage in recruitment activities (Cotter et al. 1984); national organizations also aggressively recruit candidates (Jacobson 1985). This recruitment is generally directed towards persuading quality candidates to enter the race (Olson 1978, Frendreis et al. 1990).

According to most accounts, party activity tends to be focused on general elections. The party leadership reportedly avoids getting involved in primary contests, encouraging a candidate to run but then leaving her to her own devices until the nomination is won. There are subtle methods of making sure the “right” candidate wins, however. Endorsement conventions have proved a useful tool for securing the nomination of the party’s candidates by discouraging primary competition (Jewell and Olson 1988, Herrnson and Gimpel 1995), and parties with the power to make endorsements tend to nominate more experienced candidates (Canon 1990).

Lobbying by the party leadership may not be the deciding factor for whether a candidate chooses to run. In fact, a majority of candidates for Congress are either purely self-starters or are likely to run even without party recruitment (Kazee and Thornberry 1990). This does not mean that party organization has no effect: its influence may be much more subtle. Kazee and Thornberry (1990) reject the idea of candidate recruitment in favor of the concept of candidate emergence. Even though most candidates are self-starters, nearly all of them have long histories within the local or state party organization. In short, vibrant party organizations help create a pool of future candidates. This background is a positive benefit: candidates without such ties tend to be more likely to face stiff challenges in the primary. The implication is that if party organizations are weak or nonexistent, then fewer candidates will be available and elections will be more chaotic.

I would like to suggest a further refinement of Kazee's conception of candidate emergence by conceiving of the process in sociological terms. Party organizations provide the method by which candidates can make valuable contacts and begin building support by functioning as networking institutions. Institutionalized parties provide prospective candidates with the means to develop relationships with activists, interest groups and officeholders. In a de-institutionalized setting characterized by the atomistic pursuit of power, those seeking office must build their coalitions from the ground up, a difficult task given the decline of other civic associations (Putnam 2000). The lack of such institutions, with the potential for coalition-building they represent, places a premium on pre-existing support such as that which celebrities, the wealthy, and scions of political dynasties are apt to possess. The candidate emergence in organizationally dense environments, particularly those with strong parties, would de-emphasize the importance of these characteristics and equalize political opportunities. The definition of a "quality" candidate would be different depending on the internal party structure, and with it the chances for individual candidates to win.

This theory has some empirical support. In a model predicting candidate quality (defined simply by candidate experience), Canon (1990) hypothesizes that strong parties should be more likely to nominate experienced candidates. This approach is very much in line with the electoral maximization concept of candidate recruitment. Canon measures party strength in two different ways: whether the party was permitted to endorse candidates, and whether district had an open or closed primary rule. According to Canon, the ability to endorse candidates and a closed rule should both be positively related to candidate quality. The results are contradictory: endorsement, consistent with other research, increases the likelihood that an experienced candidate will be nominated. However, a closed primary rule is negatively and significantly

related to candidate experience. In other words, amateur candidates performed better in elections restricted to party loyalists. While it could be argued that amateurs perform better because they are more ideological than other candidates, and hence more likely to win the support of issue-oriented activists, Kanthak and Morton (2001) conclude that it is *moderate* candidates who are advantaged by more restricted primary rules.

What is not included in Canon's analysis is what sort of candidates these amateurs are. The first possibility is that they are Canon's "athletes and astronauts" who are exchanging social prestige for political power. However, Canon's results would indicate that elite amateurs are helped when the primary is dominated by a smaller pool of committed party activists, results that appear somewhat counterintuitive. The second possibility is that these amateurs are party activists who have yet to run for office, and are benefiting from the smaller horizon of competition to build a political base, perhaps by pressing an ideological agenda (however, refer above to the apparent lack of intra-party ideological competition).

If the latter scenario holds true, then Canon's results are partially consistent with the sociological theory of candidate emergence and the conception of parties as networking institutions. If a closed rule implies an institutionalized party, then Canon's model supports the idea that strong parties help non-elite candidates. However, the ability to endorse is also a sign of institutionalization. As evidenced by Canon's research, which suggests that elite candidates benefit from strong party organizations, a tension may exist between the party leadership, which may prefer to endorse elite candidates, and party structure, which gives outsiders an opportunity. Whereas the party leadership has incentives to nominate experienced candidates, as indicated by the role of endorsements, the existence of party structure gives a greater opportunity for non-elite candidates. In open primary situations, it would be harder for an amateur candidate to win

support due to the greater size of the electorate, while her task would be easier under a closed rule because she could rely more on activist support.

While intriguing, these findings are only suggestive. Unfortunately, Canon conceives of candidate quality strictly in terms of candidate experience. Parties may prefer experienced inexperienced candidates, and would favor candidates with strong links to the party organization. However, the real crux of Duverger's argument is that caucus-cadre systems benefit social elites, not political ones. From the perspective of the Arrow's fairness conditions and democratic theory (like that of Rawls 1971), a nomination process that benefits those with political qualifications is perfectly appropriate. However, if entrepreneurial and caucus-cadre party organizations benefit candidates with nonpolitical qualifications, then these systems are rewarding candidates for characteristics that have little to do with elective office.

### Congressional Elections

I will examine the influence of party organizations on elections through an analysis of congressional elections. Since Congress is frequently the ultimate goal of aspiring office-seekers, a lower-level office might be a better test of the effects of organizations on recruitment. But given the paucity of data available on state legislative contests when compared to the broad and well-developed research on Congress, I believe that for the purposes of this project, Congress is the better choice.

Congressional elections research is quite diverse, with different veins of study on primaries and general elections, incumbent and open seat races, differences between the parties,

and House as opposed to Senate contests. The literature also examines not only the factors affecting electoral outcomes, but also fund-raising and candidate emergence.

One major division in the literature is the unit of analysis considered. Studies have tried to understand Congressional contests at the individual level, the level of each race or candidate, and aggregated at the national level. For the purposes of this study, I will only briefly discuss the individual-level analysis in favor of candidate and national level studies.

The first and most glaring fact about congressional elections is the comparative lack of competition. Incumbents are routinely re-elected, and the number of competitive general elections is in decline (Jacobson 2001, 2006). One explanation of this phenomenon is the steady reduction in the number of competitive “swing” districts through re-districting and geographic mobility (Jacobson 2001, 2006; McDonald 2001, 2006a, 2006b; Abramowitz et al. 2006).

Another possibility is that there has been a change in the voters: party voting and identification has increased while the number of ticket-splitters has declined (Bartels 2000, Lawrence 2001, Brewer 2005); parties have become much more ideologically polarized (Fleisher and Bond 2001, Brewer 2005); and there is much more congruence between state and national party competitiveness than in the past (Ceaser and Saldin 2005). The result is that more incumbents are in “safe” seats where they face little risk of defeat. Another possibility is that there is an increasing “quality gap” as strong challengers are less likely to run (Carson et al. 2007, Jacobson 2006, Maisel and Stone 2001, Jacobson 2006) while incumbent financial advantages (Abramowitz et al. 2006, Jacobson 2001) and resistance to national political tides (Jacobson 2001, Petrocik and Desposato 2004) have increased, an argument which I will explain in more detail below.

V.O. Key (1949) hypothesized that a decline in inter-party competition could be balanced by an increase in intra-party competition, as political conflict migrated from the general elections into the primaries. However, there is little evidence of any direct relationship between the two phenomena (Ansalabehere et al. 2006). In recent years there has been little risk to incumbents from primary challenges (Maisel and Stone 2001), and that risk may be declining (Goodliffe and Magleby 2001). There is also some evidence that ideological incumbents fare better in primary contests (Brady et al. 2007).

One of the most influential theories of congressional election outcomes is Gary Jacobson's Strategic Politicians Theory (Jacobson and Kernell 1983). Jacobson argues that the results in congressional elections are determined in part by the willingness of high-quality candidates to enter the race. Before seeking a new office, experienced officeholders examine the national mood of the country (as defined by the economy), local district conditions, and idiosyncratic factors before choosing to contest a given seat. Jacobson uses this theory to explain both candidate-level and national-level results. For House races, the challenger's vote share is a function of the previous challenger's vote, the national two-party political balance, the experience of the challenger, campaign expenditures by challengers and incumbents (Jacobson 1978, 1981, 1990a, 2000). A national-level analysis explains changes in the national balance between the two parties in House elections in a given year as a product of the change in personal income and presidential popularity from the beginning of the year, when candidates are choosing to run (Jacobson and Kernell 1983). Candidate emergence in this model acts as the essential intermediary between national political conditions and electoral outcomes. This argument has been buttressed by work indicating that serious candidates are announcing their intentions to run

early in the process, and are unlikely to pull out once they have announced (Wilcox 1987, Wilcox and Biersack 1990).

This model provides an intuitively appealing explanation for electoral results in general elections, whether analyzed race by race or as a national aggregate. Jacobson uses ordinary least squares regression analysis to test his model rather than creating a causal model, although he does examine the effects of his independent variables on candidate quality (see below). There seems to be an implicit causal model, with national and local forces working directly on vote share as well as indirectly through candidate quality.

A large body of literature has criticized or extended Jacobson's model. I will discuss each of these areas in turn, looking first at the race-level analysis. Jacobson attempts to explain the results that challengers receive in House general elections against incumbents in part as a function of challenger and incumbent spending. Surprisingly, his model indicates that incumbent spending is negatively related to vote share: the more incumbents spend, the worse they do. Jacobson explains this counterintuitive result in two ways. First, candidates who spend a great deal are frequently in competitive races, where the results are closer. Second, money's chief virtue is to buy a candidate name recognition, which incumbents already have (Jacobson 1978, 1981).

A possibly reciprocal relationship between incumbent and challenger spending might artificially deflate the significance of incumbent spending. Jacobson (1981, 1990b) and Green and Krasno (1988) use competing methods with contradictory results: Jacobson's model indicates that incumbent spending is negatively related to vote share, while Green and Krasno find that money helps rather than hurts incumbents. Other researchers find no evidence of a reciprocal relationship between incumbent and challenger spending (but see Gerber 1998).

Abramowitz (1991) finds that even with including controls for the competitiveness of the race, incumbents' spending is only weakly (but negatively) related to vote share. In addition, Krasno et al. (1994) conclude that while incumbents can react to challenger spending, challengers cannot reciprocate and simply raise and spend all that they can.

Not all congressional contests involve incumbents, however. In their study of open seat House elections, Gaddie and Bullock (2000) demonstrate results that are generally in line with the Strategic Politicians Hypothesis. Examinations of Senate races have also produced similar results (Abramowitz 1988, Squire 1989). However, Goodliffe and Magleby (2001) suggest that while campaign spending may be negatively related to vote share in races with incumbents, the two are positively related in open seat races.

Jacobson's model, if accurate, should be robust not just at the level of congressional contest, but also for the nation as a whole. Aggregate analysis for the House has been complicated by the famous midterm effect, where the President's party typically loses seats in between presidential elections. This phenomenon has been explained by surge and decline and the hostility to the President (Campbell 1993) and seat exposure (Oppenheimer et al. 1986). Abramowitz and Segal (1986) have extended these models to Senate elections, with identical results.

Jacobson's Strategic Politicians Theory was first developed in an attempt to cope with an enduring conundrum: the conflicting results between individual and aggregate level studies of the influence of economics on voting. Aggregate analyses of congressional elections by Tufte (1975) and Kramer (1971) indicate that economic growth has a powerful effect on electoral results, whether measured by seat change or vote share by the two parties. However, individual-level surveys conclude that personal economic conditions do not determine individual vote

choice (Kinder and Kiewet 1979, but see Markus 1988). Kramer (1983) argues that the individual-level results are a statistical artifact, while others suggest that voters engage in “sociotropic” voting, in which voters make decisions based on aggregate rather than individual economic performance (Kinder and Kiewet 1979).

Jacobson attempts to resolve this dilemma by arguing “you can’t beat somebody with nobody.” Incumbents are only likely to lose when facing a strong challenger, but experienced officeholders will only run against an incumbent when they believe they have a chance to win. Candidate entry by experienced officeholders is more likely when national economic or other political conditions are running strongly against the incumbent’s party. Therefore, individual voter calculus is not directly affected by economic conditions, but indirectly through candidate emergence. Jacobson modified Tufte’s model by using presidential popularity and real disposable income in the spring of the election year, rather than in the fall as Tufte does (Tufte 1975, Jacobson and Kernell 1983). Jacobson uses the interrelationship between national political tides and challenger quality in an attempt to explain aggregate electoral outcomes during the period 1980 to 1998 (Jacobson 2001).

Born (1986) critiques Jacobson’s approach arguing that economic activity over the whole term is a better predictor of aggregate vote share, and that there is little evidence for voters preferring quality candidates when controlling for other factors. Marra and Ostrom (1989) combine a number of measures representing different hypotheses, and conclude that personal income has little effect on vote share and that there is little empirical support for Jacobson’s theory. Erickson (1990) also challenges the idea that economics has any effect at all, inverting Kramer’s argument by suggesting that the aggregate results are an artifact (but see Jacobson 1990c). Finally, Basinger and Ensley (2007) suggest that candidate quality is of less importance

in and of itself than as a signal to campaign contributors that a candidate is worth supporting. They argue that challenger spending is of greater importance than quality, which has an indirect rather than a direct effect (see also Alexander 2005). However, Green and Krasno (1988) and Steen (2006) suggest that experienced candidates are greatly superior in their use of campaign resources compared to inexperienced candidates.

### *Candidate Quality*

Candidate quality appears to be of growing importance in determining election results (Jacobson and Kernell 1983, Jacobson 1990a, 2001). Research suggests that the routine reelection of incumbents in recent years is due to the lack of serious opposition (Cox and Katz 1996, Levitt and Wolfram 1997, Jacobson 2001, Maisel and Stone 2001b). Experienced challengers have the best chance at victory, but they are increasingly unlikely to run (Fowler and McClure 1989, Berkman and Eisenstein 1999, Jacobson 1990a). Part of the reason is the simple self-fulfilling prophecy that incumbents are unbeatable, which means that challengers are deterred from running, which in turn reinforces the mystique of incumbent invulnerability (Maisel and Stone 2001a). Incumbents are frequently opposed by “hopeless” amateurs who are less interested in winning than in staking out a position or getting political experience (Canon 1990).

Factors other than the myth of the invincible incumbent discourage quality opposition. As has been discussed already, the political parties work actively to recruit candidates, but generally most candidates for office are running “on their own hook” (like Kazee’s self-starters). A political upbringing and sense of efficacy is strongly related to political ambition (Fox and Lawless 2005). Running for office has important psychological (Kazee 1980) and personal costs

(Maisel and Stone 2001a). Campaigning is a grueling process with enormous inherent and opportunity costs. Additionally, candidates considering a run for the House or Senate confront a highly uncertain environment characterized by extreme information scarcity. Even well-connected potential candidates do not always know who is running or what their real chances are early in the political calendar (Maisel 1982, Kazee 1994). Potentially good candidates are hesitant to run even when their general election chances are good (Kazee 1983), in part because of the likelihood of a difficult primary contest (Maisel and Stone 1997, Maisel and Stone 2001b). There is some evidence that Senate candidates focus exclusively on their chances in the primary, whatever their general election chances (Squire 1989).

The mere existence of primaries may act as a deterrent to challenging an incumbent of the opposite party (Maisel and Stone 2001b). However, a survey of state legislators (Maestas et al. 2006) indicated that while the cost of running shapes the ambitions of potential candidates, the question is rather *when* to run than whether to run at all.

A number of factors influence candidate entry in congressional elections. Experienced candidates are most likely to run in districts that are favorable to their party (Canon 1990a, Bond et al. 1997, Gaddie and Bullock 2000, Stone and Maisel 2003). Candidates are also more likely to run against an incumbent who has performed poorly in the past (Bianco 1984, Bond et al. 1985, Krasno and Green 1988 et al. 1988, Squire and Wright 1990, Jacobson 1990a, Canon 1990) or is new to the seat (Canon 1990, Jacobson 1990a). On the other hand, incumbents who are out of line with their districts ideologically face fewer risks in the general election than might be expected (Bond et al. 1985, Squire 1989, Adams and Squire 1997, Gulati 2004, Burden 2001).

In line with Jacobson's theory, national economic trends (Jacobson 1990a, Canon 1990) tend to affect candidate entry, as does Presidential approval (Jacobson 1990a, Lublin 1994).

Interestingly, some evidence suggests that a poor local economy can also increase the chances of a serious challenge (Bond 1985, Lublin 1994, but see Krasno and Green 1988). Incumbents who are coping with a scandal are also likely to face experienced opponents (Canon 1990).

Incumbents face greater danger of major opposition in districts where there is simply a large pool of potential opposition (Canon 1990a, Jacobson 1990a), particularly in Senate races (Squire 1989, 1991, Adams and Squire 1997).

Quality challengers are far more likely to run after re-districting, so much so that they delay their candidacy – a phenomenon that partially explains the cyclical pattern of declining competitiveness over the course of each decade (Hetherington et al. 2003, Carson et al. 2006). Experienced candidates may also have an ability to deter weaker candidates from running (Romero 2004). Finally, experienced candidates who have been defeated in a previous race for an open seat are more likely to seek a re-match if national conditions look favorable (Taylor and Boatright 2005).

### *Fund-raising*

The substantial controversy about the effects of campaign finance on candidate emergence focuses on two interrelated arguments. The first is whether early spending deters serious competitors from challenging an incumbent; the second is whether early fund-raising (the “war chest”) frightens off quality challengers. These large sums decrease the likelihood that donors would support the opposition, a serious problem given the importance of early money for candidate viability (Biersack et al. 1993). Rather than incumbent finances acting directly to increase their re-election chances, the effect of incumbents’ fundraising acts indirectly by deterring strong challengers.

As straightforward as this notion is, the evidence is mixed. Krasno and Green (1988) argue that war chests and preemptive spending have little deterrence in House races, and Squire (1991) finds similar results for the Senate. The latter suggests that early spending and fund-raising is in fact a sign of weakness for incumbents: they raise large sums in because they expect serious competition. Different methods of analysis have found evidence suggesting a “war chest” effect on candidate entry (Maisel and Stone 2001a, Kazee 1980, Box-Steffensmeier 1996, Goodliffe 2001, but see Epstein and Zemsky 1995).

Given the partial evidence for the importance of campaign money on both electoral outcomes and candidate emergence, more focus is needed on how the money is raised and spent. Candidates for Congress receive funds from a number of different sources: self-financing, party contributions (whether from leadership, legislative or national campaign committees), PACs, and individual contributors. The source of campaign funds may influence electoral outcomes directly, with PAC and money raised in-state improving vote share and self-financing reducing it (Alexander 2005).

The national committees have become increasingly involved in House campaigns over the last several decades, with the Republicans leading the way. They tend to donate to candidates based on incumbency (Jacobson 1985, Herrnson 1989), the competitiveness of the candidate (Jacobson 1985, Herrnson 1989, Damore 1999), and the quality of the candidate (Herrnson 1989). As noted previously, considerable evidence suggests that the Republican National Committee (RNC) is more focused on marginal seats, whereas the Democratic National Committee (DNC) tends to support incumbents. This difference may be a temporal artifact, however, since during the periods under examination Democrats were in the majority. There is little support so far for the idea that the legislative campaign committees use contributions as a

tool for influencing voting behavior in the chamber (Cantor and Herrnson 1997, Damore and Hansford 1999).

House and Senate races display sharp differences in the determinants of campaign fund-raising. Seat marginality and legislative voting record are important for House candidates (McAdams and Johannes 1987), but not the Senate (Squire 1989, 1991). On the other hand, candidate quality appears to be a predictor of fund-raising for the Senate (Squire 1989) but not the House (McAdams and Johannes 1987).

Some extensions of this work go beyond general elections with incumbents. Generally, there appears to be little difference in the fund-raising dynamics between general elections and primaries (Goodliffe and Magleby 2001), and the chief benefit of early campaign fund-raising is not votes but later fund-raising success (Leal 2003). Analysis of open seat elections reveals similar results as well, with candidate experience, party money, and favorability of the district as relevant predictors of candidate fund-raising (Gaddie and Bullock 2000). Brunell (2005) suggests that corporations are more likely to contribute to Republicans in open-seat and other competitive races, implying that donors on occasion act sincerely (according to ideological predispositions) rather than strictly strategically (in order to gain access).

Self-financing candidates are a special case. Capable of raising vast sums of money without benefit of political experience, they may be able to essentially buy political viability. A detailed study of self-financers by Steen (2006) suggests that they generally do not benefit as much as might be expected. Self-financers tend to use their money less wisely than experienced candidates by spending late in the race rather than early. Self-financers have little capacity to “scare off” primary opposition, and they tend to perform less well at the polls when other factors are controlled (see also Alexander 2005, Goodliffe and Magleby 2001). Self-financing may in

fact be a sign of political weakness, as it is negatively related to political experience and may serve to replace rather than supplement support from other sources. Fund-raising may be considered a form of campaigning, one that undermines candidates that avoid it. Finally, while self-financers generally run on the theme that they cannot be “bought” by campaign contributors, who are generally far wealthier than the general population (Francia 2003), once in office they tend to revert to the raise funds from donors in a similar way to other incumbents (Steen 2006).

In sum, congressional elections are a product of national political forces (the economy and the president) local district forces (seat marginality), and campaign factors (candidate quality, campaign spending). National and local forces appear to work directly on the vote, but also indirectly through campaign fund-raising and candidate quality. Party organization has rarely been included as a relevant factor determining election results, but theory suggests that party organizational structure may have an indirect effect by influencing candidate quality. To test this theory, simple dichotomous variables of candidate quality and “strong” party organizations are inadequate, since the meaning of quality and strength may in part depend on the institutional environment. This question is important because of the potential violations of democratic norms of fairness. Developing a good method of answering this question is the task of the next section.

**CHAPTER THREE:**  
**MEASURING CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS**  
**&**  
**PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH**

Candidate Characteristics

While general election campaigns are fairly well understood, some the principal explanatory factors (the national economy, partisan complexion of the district, presidential approval, etc.) (see Jacobson 2001) do little to explain intra-party competition. Other than incumbency, we have as of yet little understanding of what determines competitiveness in primary elections. In addition, attempts to examine the consequences of divisive primaries on general election outcomes have been limited by the sparse data available (Romero 2003).

There is one source of data that can provide additional information on the history of congressional primaries, however. Between 1980 and 1998, Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report (CQ) issued surveys to announced primary and general election candidates to determine age and professional status. These data have been used by Jonathan Krasno and others to develop measures of candidate quality. In addition, CQ Weekly used these surveys as well as other sources to give fairly thorough descriptions of election campaigns. These descriptions covered a number of different factors: political and professional experience, ethnicity, personal wealth, and political support. CQ often mentioned whether a candidate was backed by important members of the party or by key interest groups.

I have used the information available in the CQ Weekly campaign descriptions to develop a series of candidate variables. After reviewing the campaign narratives, I collected data on the appearance of key phrases and descriptions, and combined these data with the information revealed by the candidate surveys to develop a description of primary candidates.

There are a number of potential difficulties with this data set. The first is the temporal limitation. Unfortunately, CQ stopped surveying primary candidates in all but open seats after the 1998 election season. It also sharply reduced its coverage of House elections generally. As a result, extending such detailed analysis into the contemporary period is not possible. While it could be argued that this study is therefore excessively time-bound, it is not unreasonable to assume that the basic structure of congressional primary competition with respect to candidate backgrounds has not changed dramatically in the last decade (although the development of internet-based fundraising operations might call this assumption into question).

Of more serious concern is the possibility that CQ's coverage of congressional primaries is not consistent over time. There is a moderate decline in the volume of coverage during periods of relative congressional stability (in the late 1980's and again in the late 1990's), and considerably greater depth for the 1980-82 and 1992-94 periods. These differences are easily explained, however, by the volatility of those periods, when presumably a large number of seats were contested by quality candidates because out-party nominations were worth having. CQ is quite consistent in its description of candidate professions. In the fallow periods, coverage is shallower and a greater share of the candidates are politically inexperienced. While there may be some bias towards competitive races, this weight in coverage seems defensible given that we *should* pay more attention to congressional primaries in which the nominee has some likelihood of winning. Races that are "hopeless" for primary winners are less likely to witness strong

ideological or organizational conflict than those in which there is a real chance of a general election victory.

I grouped information gleaned from the CQ campaign narratives into several categories. I have broken political experience into a number of different elements, the first being *elective experience*. Those who have served in high office are coded according to the type of office. The first and most important classification is that for incumbents, who are routinely re-elected. Other types of elected officials include those who have previously been elected to statewide offices, state legislatures, county offices, and to other local offices (including mayors, city councils, and school boards). While it could be argued that Mayors or County Executives would have different electoral clout than candidates from City Councils or County Councils, respectively, in Congressional contests it is likely that this only the case for executives from major principalities, none of whom ran for Congress during this period. Another category is *campaign experience*, divided into those who have run statewide, for congress, or for lower level offices. I have distinguished between those candidates who have run unsuccessfully in previous primaries from those who were nominated but defeated in the general election.

Office-holding experience is an overriding factor in how candidates are evaluated, so much so that it has been used as the principal measure of candidate quality by Jacobson, Krasno and others. (Krasno & Green 1988, Jacobson 2001). Consequently I have generally treated them as professional “trump” characteristics. In other words, a doctor who has served as a state legislator is coded simply as a state legislator, not as both. The cue for “doctor” is assumed to be of much less importance than previous experience. With the exception of former members of the House, I have not distinguished between former and current officeholders. Doing so would both further increase the degrees of freedom and, more importantly, risk serious errors in the data

coding process. Candidates leave office for any number of reasons, many of which may not impair their future vote-getting potential. For the sake of simplicity, candidates who are currently holding an office are coded for that office only (even if they have had or sought others), and are coded for running for another seat (see below) only if it was at a higher level, since that might increase their name recognition and be an advantage.

Other types of candidate experience (political or professional) are coded in an additive rather than an exclusionary way. In other words, a political activist who has never held public office is judged both by his or her political activism, as well as by his or her profession (assuming both types of information are available).

There are other types of *political experience* that may play a role in primary elections. Congressional aides frequently run for their employers' seats. This position may give them a particular advantage due to greater familiarity with the district useful political connections. As a consequence I have categorized them differently from those who have been other types of political aides (consultants, white house, gubernatorial, or state legislative staff), who are grouped together simply as "political aides." In addition, I have grouped candidates who have served in appointive office according to the level of administration: federal officials, statewide officials, and local officials. Other types of political experience include political activists and party officials (at any level), as well as professional lobbyists.

I have also coded for non-political professional experience. Most of the candidates in this category fall into the "Other" category, since there is no statistical evidence supporting the expectation that most non-political professional experience would influence voters or political activists. There are some exceptions, however. Those in professions that might have some influence with the electorate or political stakeholders have been categorized separately. Those

who have served as senior administrators in non-profit or corporate organizations, designated “executives”, or who are small business owners, classified as “owners,” have been coded separately. Attorneys comprise a large percentage of elected officials, so they have their own category, as do other high-status or public service professions such as doctors, accountants, judges, veterans, teachers, professors or those involved in law enforcement or the military. I have also included “farmer” as a separate category comprising farmers and ranchers, since they could have a political advantage in rural areas. Lastly, there I have coded for candidates who are described as “community activists.” While not political, presumably such individuals would possess contacts useful during an election campaign.

An additional background characteristic is that of race. In those contests in which ethnicity is mentioned and there is more than one ethnic group referenced, I have coded for “Black”, “White”, and “Hispanic.” To capture other potentially influential factors, candidates who are described as being wealthy or related to political families (with a separate coding for belonging to the incumbent’s family) are coded separately.

Beyond background characteristics, I have also coded for political support. While several studies of congressional elections have been able to include measures of candidate characteristics, data availability has limited their ability to take into account the role of party stakeholders. These constituencies could play a major role in primary contests. While during general election campaigns each stakeholder will (in most cases) support the party’s nominee, in primary contests they can play a more independent role, backing those candidates whom they believe would support their interests. The campaign narratives provided by CQ frequently mention whether a candidate has some form of support from one of these constituencies. As

such, the campaign narratives provide information that could prove crucial in building a more powerful explanatory model of congressional primaries.

I have coded each instance in which a candidate is mentioned as having the support of a key constituency. These constituencies include: women, labor, environmental groups, teachers, evangelicals, business, and other organizational support. I have also included a variable for prominent newspaper endorsements. Of particular importance for this study, I have also noted the occasions in which members of the party leadership are described as being in support of a candidate. CQ's descriptions are frequently very ambiguous as to what level of party leadership is involved; thus, all such instances have been grouped together under a general "party support" variable. I have also noted candidates who have the support of the incumbent. In races in which an incumbent is present, it is assumed that the incumbent is supported by all of the relevant organizational groups unless otherwise noted. Given incumbent re-election rates and the desire of organized groups to have a friendly hearing in congress, it is unlikely for an incumbent to be challenged for re-nomination by an opponent with significant organizational backing; thus it is safe to assume that unless the campaign narrative has mentioned it, such an occasion has not occurred.

In a number of instances, candidates are described as having a particular ideological profile. While only limited evidence supports the notion that primary elections are determined by ideological cleavages (Bond et al. 1985, Squire 1989, Adams and Squire 1997, Gulati 2004, Burden 2001), the bulk of these studies have been concerned with general elections and all have studied races with incumbents. In open primaries, ideology could play much more of a role. Candidates have therefore been coded as to whether they are described as liberal, moderate, or conservative. Republicans are only grouped into moderates and conservatives, as there are

almost no mentions of liberal Republicans in the CQ campaign narratives. Democrats, on the other hand, have all three classifications. I have also identified one enduring issue cleavage that appears repeatedly in descriptions of primary contests in both parties – the issue of abortion. Throughout the entire period (1980-1998), both parties have had a number of primaries in which candidates took opposite sides on the issue. Candidates are characterized as either pro-life or pro-choice. As with race, these ideological distinctions are only identified when there is a division among the primary candidates.

A number of additional campaign “event” variables are drawn from the data. The first is whether the candidate has been accused of wrongdoing, indicted, or even convicted. These candidates are coded with the “scandal” variable. Other exceptional circumstances included in the dataset are perennial candidates (those who have run for office repeatedly without success), fringe candidates (with extreme political views, such as LaRouche supporters), and those who have switched parties.

### Party Organizational Strength

#### *The Survey of State Party Leaders*

A number of methods have been used to measure the strength of political parties. The most widely used approach is drawn from Cotter and colleagues’ (Cotter et al. 1984) survey of State Party Chairs and Executive Directors, who were asked a battery of questions regarding the structure and behavior of their organizations. They use factor analysis (using a biquartimin method) of survey responses in 90 state parties to develop 3 dimensions of party strength: bureaucratization, recruitment, and programmatic capacity. According to Cotter et al., these

factors are highly correlated with one another, indicating a broader underlying measure of party organizational strength. Cotter et al. then ran a second-order factor analysis of these dimensions to create factor scores for each state, which they used as a generalized measure of party strength. This summary measure of party strength was most closely related to the administrative articulation of state parties, with the number of staff divisions related to party strength with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of .86.

In 1998, John Aldrich *et al.* (1998) began an update of the Cotter study in an effort to measure the aggregate change in state party strength since the original survey 18 years before. Andrea McAtee expanded this update in 2003. I have combined these 2 later surveys (averaging responses where necessary) to come up with an estimate of party strength in each state at the end of the 1990's. My original intention was to compare the two measures of party strength, one in 1980 and one roughly two decades later, in order to measure temporal change in party organizational strength.

I attempted to replicate Cotter et al.'s factor analysis using direct oblimin (.5 rotation), which gave second order factor scores correlating to the original data with a coefficient of .98. Including the data from the 1998/2003 update and re-running the factor analysis produces little change, with the original and new factor scores for the entire Cotter et al. data demonstrating a .96 correlation coefficient (the 1975-80 survey responses have a Pearson's coefficient of .95). The incorporation of the new 1998/2003 data, while slightly changing the factor scores, does not fundamentally change Cotter et al.'s analysis, thereby providing additional evidentiary support for their study. Re-running the factor analysis with the new data could also make it possible to statistically compare baseline party strength (in 1980) to later party strength (approximately 2000).

Regrettably, there are a host of obstacles involved with using the original 1980 Party Transformation study. First, the presentation of the results from the original 1980 study does not provide factor scores for each state party in 1980 (or any other period, for that matter). In addition, the file held by the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) containing the raw data of the Cotter study does not include a tag for “state,” making it extremely difficult to re-create a distinct measure for each state’s party organizational strength. This task is made even more intractable by the over-sampling of some states in Cotter’s survey. While Cotter et al. give a ranking (with a high of 1.000 and a low of 0.000) of state party strength, it is not feasible to simply match these rankings with the factor scores from the raw data. Some states must have been surveyed more than once, since there are only 90 state parties in the survey but 137 cases. Presumably the survey responses were averaged for each state party; otherwise the results would suffer from severe sample bias. In any event, it is impossible to identify which factor score corresponds with which state.

Despite several efforts, using the ranking of state party strength (presented separately from the raw data) to estimate the original factor scores proved impossible. Every attempt to do so relied largely on guesswork and produced factor scores with biased means and different standard deviations from the Cotter et al. ranking structure. Another possibility would be to use the party strength ranking itself as the baseline in 1980. By standardizing the 0 to 1 ranking from 1980 and the factor scores from the 1998/2003 studies, both sets of data can be converted into the same metric. Under most conditions, this method would only give information as to the relative position of each state party. Standardization gives information on the *placement* of each data point relative to other data points. It does not tell us whether there has been an *absolute* difference between the two data sets. For example, if the Ohio Democratic Party’s standardized

party strength score was .25 in 1980 and .11 in 2000, it would only mean that Ohio's Democratic Party had grown weaker relative to other states over the twenty year interval. It would *not* necessarily mean that the party had actually grown structurally weaker, however. If the absolute means for all states were higher in 2000 than in 1980, Ohio's party might actually have grown stronger, although that strength would have grown less quickly than in other states. Only if the national average of state party strength changed very little or not at all over the period 1980-2000 would standardization give an estimate of absolute change in party strength, rather than just relative change.

Cotter et al. present the national average of state party strength for both political parties in each of several time periods. In the 1975-80 period (the period needed to establish a baseline of party strength), the mean for the Democrats was -.48 (n=60), and for Republicans .41 (n=77). These means are different from the means calculated directly from the ICPSR dataset, which has a national Democratic mean of -.15 and a Republican mean of .16. This difference in results would lead one to suspect that the samples are weighted by state, but if so, why would Cotter et al. indicate that the sample size was 137 (the number of survey *respondents*) rather than 90 (the number of surveyed *state parties*)? To make matters more mysterious, the raw, unweighted data available through ICPSR gives a national average of .02, while the average of the national Democratic and Republican parties combined with the (supposedly) weighted data is *also* .02 – an unlikely coincidence at best.

There are a number of other problems with the Cotter study. First, if their data are correct, then state parties have grown organizationally weaker over the last two decades. The (unweighted) average for the period of 1975-80 was -.0389, and for 1998/2003 it was -.0438. According to this analysis, if the unweighted and weighted national party averages happen to be

the same, then state parties experienced a 12.6% decline in organizational capacity – a conclusion profoundly at odds not just with much of the literature on party organizations, but the authors' own conclusions (Gibson et al. 1985, Cotter et al. 1989, Gibson et al. 1989)

More serious, the accuracy of the survey results can be called into question. Public reporting of state party expenditure for the 2002-2004 period is available on the Party Lines website (<http://www.publicintegrity.org/partylines/>). Party expenditures are grouped into a number of categories: Administrative, Media, Political Contributions, Candidate Support, Transfers, Fundraising, and Other. I examined the correlation of state party expenditures in each of these categories, as well as the total amount, with the various dimensions of party organizational strength and the summary party strength measure in the 1998/2003 update of the Cotter et al. study.

The results presented in Table 3.1 indicate a modest relationship between how state party officials say they allocate resources and how they actually do so. Of the dimensions of state party strength in the POS survey (using Pearson's coefficients), only Budget and Staff Size are even modestly correlated with any party spending categories. The Budget dimension is correlated at .45 with Administration, .41 with Candidate Support, and .43 with Total Spending. Staff Size is correlated at .49 with both Administration and Candidate Support, .54 with Media, and .52 with Total Spending. In addition, the summary measure of party organizational strength is only weakly related to party spending, with a correlation of around .3 with Administration, Candidate Support, Fundraising, and Total Spending.

Controlling for possible confounding effects does not strengthen the statistical relationship between party spending and the party survey data. In fact, it leads to the surprising

result that party strength is more closely related to raw party spending than expenditures which take into account size effects or the priority parties place on spending categories.

Since using raw financial data could inflate the party strength of larger states (as they would almost inevitably raise and spend more money), I first controlled for possible size effects by dividing each state's expenditures by state population (see Table 3.2). Doing so actually weakens the correlation between party spending and survey responses. The strongest relationships, between Voter Mobilization and Transfers (-.4) and between overall party strength and Administration (-.3), are both in the *negative* direction. The latter point is particularly important, since it undercuts Cotter et al.'s argument that the size of a party's institutional structure is the strongest determinant of party strength. In addition, if accurate, these results indicate that states with larger populations tend to have stronger parties. This could either be because there is a threshold level of resources necessary to build a strong party, or that the big Northeastern and Midwestern states possess large cities, the historic homes of party machines, and hence happen to be stronger. I also examined the relative share of party expenditures in each category in Table 3.3, but correlations between party spending and party survey results virtually disappeared. The strongest relationship is between Transfers and Budgets (.33).

The Cotter et al. study also has a number of methodological problems. A close examination of the codebook reveals that the authors used marginal mean imputation to replace missing data. In each dimension of party strength, the mean of that dimension was inserted in place of missing cases. According to Haitovsky (1968) and Allison (2001), this method leads to "biased estimates of variances and covariances." As a result, it is possible that the existence of generalized party strength and the factor scores generated by their analysis is a statistical artifact. In addition, McAtee (2004) pointed out that Cotter et al.'s results seems very reliant on the

particular method of factor analysis they employ. I tested Cotter et al.'s data set with different rotations, some of which produced more than one overarching dimension, weak correlations with Cotter et al.'s summary factor score, and different factor loads and correlations with dimensions of party strength.

### *Other Measures of Party Organizational Strength*

Given the variety of problems associated with the Cotter et al.'s party organizational strength (POS) measure, it should be used with a great deal of caution. There are a number of alternative methods of measuring party organizational strength. Jewell and Morehouse (2001) lay out a number of different approaches, which can be grouped into two categories: institutional practice (pre-primary endorsement procedures, primary rules, regulation of party finances, and party registration) and electoral history (degree of control of state government and party factionalism).

Endorsement of a candidate before a primary election is a potentially powerful means for a state party to influence the electoral process. States which issue pre-primary endorsements are likely to have much more substantial state party organizations, since any candidate who wants the nomination will have to work through traditional party structures. Jewell and Morehouse divide state parties into three categories: those that endorse candidates before the primary by law; those that do so by practice; and those that do not endorse candidates. In this study, state parties that endorse by law are rated as a "2"; parties that do so by practice are rated "1", and parties that do not endorse at all are rated "0."

Similarly, the degree to which party activists and party leaders can influence nomination contests is also shaped by primary rules. Primary elections that are restricted to faithful partisans

will be much more amenable to influence by the party structure, while states with more open primary rules are likely to see much weaker parties. I have combined the classification scheme given by Jewell and Morehouse with more recent data from Kanthak and Morton (2001). State parties are ranked according to the degree of openness of their primaries: blanket and non-partisan primaries (“0”), pure open primaries (“1”), semi-open primaries (“2”), semi-closed primaries (“3”), and pure closed primaries (“4”).

Presidential nomination procedures are another method for evaluating state party organizational strength. States using caucuses to select delegates to the national nominating conventions could have more highly institutionalized political organizations, as caucuses require candidates to recruit volunteers and campaign workers willing to devote substantial amounts of time to politics. This type of nominating structure could have the ancillary affect of strengthening state party organizations. Herrnson and Gimpel (1995), for example, use caucus states as a proxy for party organizational strength. I have gathered information on state delegate selection procedures for both parties between 1980 and 1996 ([http://library.cqpress.com/vsap/vsap05\\_tab1-24](http://library.cqpress.com/vsap/vsap05_tab1-24)), with “0” indicating the use of a primary and “1” indicating a caucus.

Endorsement procedures, primary rules, and presidential nominating processes can change over time. Many states had one procedure in 1980 and went through at least one change over the twenty-year period under examination in this study. Since I am interested in the long-term structural features of state political parties, I have averaged the rules employed by state parties over time to capture a general tendency in state party strength. For example, a state that used caucuses to select national convention delegates in 1980 and 1984, but thereafter employed

primaries, would be coded as .4, since in two-fifths of the election cycles the caucus system was used.

State parties that are subject to legal limitations on their ability to raise and spend funds are obviously much more restricted in their capacity to influence the electoral process. Many states either limit or ban a party's ability to receive donations from individuals or political action committees (PACs). Some states also limit donations by the state party to its candidates. In each case (individual contributions to the party, PAC contributions to the party, and party contributions to party candidates), states are ranked according to their freedom to raise and spend funds: "0" for those that are prohibited, "1" for those that are limited, and "2" for those state parties that are unregulated. The three types of regulation are then combined into an index, rated 0 to 6, based on a party's freedom from state regulation of its finances. In addition, I have included a simple dummy variable based on whether voters in a state are permitted to register as members of a political party.

Party factionalism is another important indicator of state party strength. Parties with substantial institutional resources will be much less effective if they are caught up in internecine political disputes. Furthermore, a strong state party may be less prone to such conflicts. Accordingly, Jewell and Morehouse's measure of party factionalism is calculated by taking the average percentage of the vote of the primary winner in the race for Governor in primary elections between 1980 and 1998. State parties whose nominees have earned smaller shares of the vote demonstrate less capacity to deter intra-party competition and are generally less unified. Unfortunately, the authors do not present the raw data, instead ranking them according to the factionalism in each party. I have re-created the Jewell-Morehouse party factionalism measure, using primary returns from 1979 to 1998 drawn from the Congressional Quarterly Voting and

Elections website (<http://library.cqpress.com/elections/>). My sample goes back an additional year beyond that of Jewell and Morehouse in order that every state has twenty years in which gubernatorial elections can occur (since some states have elections in odd-numbered years).

The other electoral measure of party organizational strength Jewell and Morehouse employ is the Ranney index, which averages a party's success in state (rather than federal) elections. The measure is calculated by averaging the percentage of the vote won by the party's candidate for governor, the number of state senate and house seats won, and the proportion of years the party controlled the governorship, state house, and state senate. I have included Jewell and Morehouse's measurement of the "Party Control" version of the Ranney variable (rather than the "Competitiveness" version). The "CONTROL" measure indicates the degree to which a party controls state government, while the "Competitiveness" variable measures the closeness of party divisions. Party control is clearly a better indicator of party strength.

Party finances are another method of measuring party organizational strength. While only recently have most states required state parties to publicly document their fundraising and spending activities, the Federal Elections Commission reports go back to 1980. There are three methods for using FEC returns to measure party strength. The first method is to use the candidate summary files, which indicate the sum of money from all party committees (state, local, and national) to federal candidates. Until the development of independent expenditures in general elections (from 1996), parties were restricted to only direct financial contributions to candidates and coordinated expenditures. Both types of assistance are limited by federal law. I have averaged contributions to all federal candidates from all party committees in each state over the entire period, 1980-1998. A year-by-year measurement would risk inflating the role of parties in states that happen to have had a competitive election in any given election cycle. By averaging

party contributions across the entire era, however, the risk of this sort of bias is substantially reduced.

This first method of measuring party financial strength has one glaring problem: it includes contributions from party committees from outside the state. A significant investment from the national party and other out-of-state party sources could artificially inflate the strength of the party in a given state. Since the FEC candidate summary files do not distinguish between in-state and out-of-state party committees, the second strategy for measuring state party strength uses the FEC's committee donor files, which indicates both whether a given committee is a partisan one and the state in which the committee was incorporated. The "In-State Party Contribution" measure is calculated by totaling the contributions from in-state party committees to all federal candidates in each election cycle, and then averaging the results across time.

The third method of measuring party financial resources in a given state is through the examination of party financial networks. The FEC requires reporting by all individuals and committees contributing to candidates for federal office. Many of these donors are loyal contributors to a particular party. Although they are not part of the formal party organization, these donors could be included within a broader definition of the party. A party with a vast pool of contributors might be significantly stronger and more influential than it would otherwise appear. In later chapters, I will test the relationship between contributions from the party loyalists and support from the party itself. For the "Party Loyalist Contribution" variable, all donations to a federal candidate are weighted by the loyalty of that donor (whether individual or committee) to the political party (calculated by dividing the donations to a given party by the total contributions made by the donor). For example, a donor who gives only \$1000 dollars to a

party's candidates but gives only to that party is weighted identically to a donor who gives \$2000 to the party but divides her contributions evenly between both parties.

All three of the party financial measures described above compare party financial strength using strict dollar-for-dollar comparisons: a thousand dollars raised by a party in South Dakota is deemed of equal value to a thousand dollars raised by a party in California. However, the dramatic difference in population size would indicate that the South Dakota party is raising more money for its candidates on a per capita basis, which might be a much better measure of relative party strength across states. To measure the per capita financial strength of each party, all three measurements (Party Committee, InState Party contributions, and Party Loyalist contributions) are weighted by the population of each state in each year. Since states grow at different rates over time, this leads to a very different estimate of state party financial strength.

A comparison of the electoral, regulatory, and financial strength of state parties contradicts Cotter *et al.*'s position that party strength is a unidimensional phenomenon. I performed a simple correlation matrix (see Table 3.4) comprising the following measures of party organizational strength: factionalism, financial regulations, party control, caucuses, registration, endorsement rule, primary rule, direct party contributions, in-state party contributions, and party loyalist contributions. I also included the 1980 and 1998/2003 iterations of the state party survey as well as the average of the two periods. The various measures of party organizational strength are only modestly correlated. The strongest relationship is between states that allow party registration and restrictive primary rules (.687). Interestingly, the other rule procedure, caucus vs. primary, is not strongly correlated with either variable. The only other correlation that exceeds .500 was between Party and InState Party committee contributions. No other dimensions are correlated with each other above the .400 level.

A factor analysis replicating Cotter et al.'s methods (using .5 direct oblimin rotation), the results of which are presented in Table 3.5, generates not three dimensions of party organizational strength, but four. There is no general underlying component of party strength, but a number of different dimensions. Dimension one, with substantial party registration and networking contributions factor loadings, is negatively related to low factionalism and endorsement procedures. Dimension two loads with registration and primary rules, but negatively with direct and instate party contributions – which load instead on factor three. Finally, party control loads most strongly with factor four. In short, measuring what parties are legally able to do, and the resources at their command, exhibits a very different profile of state parties than that portrayed by Cotter et al.'s survey of party chairs.

Partitioning the pool of state parties into Democrats (Table 3.6) and Republicans (Table 3.7) does not generate substantially stronger relationships among the dimensions of party strength. A correlation matrix indicates that in both parties, primary and registration rules are positively correlated (.679 for Democrats, .694 for Republicans), as are direct and instate party contributions (.585 for Republicans, .752 for Democrats). For each party, other measures of party strength are only modestly correlated. For Democrats, factionalism is positively related to endorsement rules (.413) and negatively related to party control of state government (-.427). Party control is also negatively related to direct party contributions (-.428) and positively related to network contributions (.484). For Republican state parties, factionalism is negatively related to network contributions (-.417), while control is positively related to direct party contributions (.412).

A factor analysis of each party's state organizations also does not suggest that party strength can be measured using a single variable. For Democrats, the measures of party strength

cluster in four dimensions, while for Republicans there are five. In neither case is the classification of dimension of party strength into electoral, regulatory, and financial strength supported. Most importantly, the generalized factor score by Cotter and Gibson (averaged with the later data) does not load especially strongly on any of the factors.

The preliminary analysis above demonstrates the lack of any strong statistical relationship between the dimensions of party strength, which poses a challenge to any examination of the role of parties in congressional elections. It would be a far simpler matter if there were, as argued by Cotter *et al.*, a single measure of party strength. However, the meaning of the term “strength” is elusive. A party’s financial resources, institutional practice, and electoral cohesion and success exist independently from one another rather clustering in a straightforward measure of “strength.” It is unclear which of these basic categories has the most influence over the electoral process. In later chapters I will test the ways in which each of the dimensions of party strength affect congressional elections. In doing so, I will examine each distinct element’s capacity to shape recruitment, fundraising, and electoral success. Different elements of party strength may demonstrate different forms of party strength. Specifically, a cohesive and well-resourced party could in some circumstances favor the institutional leadership of the party (the “machine” model), while in others these same factors could empower party activists (the “networking” model). I will examine these potential differences in subsequent chapters.

Table 3.1 Correlation of Raw Party Budget and Party Survey Data

	Staff divisions	Professionalism	Access	Publish	Polling	Voterid	Issue leadership	Service	Cancont	Recruitment	Staffsize
Staffdivisions	1.000	0.328	0.124	0.085	0.338	0.094	-0.152	0.635	0.157	0.134	0.368
Professionalism	0.328	1.000	-0.015	0.030	0.174	0.159	-0.174	0.191	0.176	0.014	0.262
Access	0.124	-0.015	1.000	0.039	0.088	-0.121	0.180	0.031	0.068	-0.092	0.112
Publish	0.085	0.030	0.039	1.000	0.220	0.271	-0.195	0.004	0.058	-0.040	0.159
Polling	0.338	0.174	0.088	0.220	1.000	0.107	0.076	0.260	0.340	-0.017	0.139
Voterid	0.094	0.159	-0.121	0.271	0.107	1.000	-0.173	0.147	0.150	0.237	0.119
Issueleadership	-0.152	-0.174	0.180	-0.195	0.076	-0.173	1.000	-0.078	0.304	-0.059	-0.084
Service	0.635	0.191	0.031	0.004	0.260	0.147	-0.078	1.000	0.187	0.256	0.277
Cancont	0.157	0.176	0.068	0.058	0.340	0.150	0.304	0.187	1.000	0.083	0.283
Recruitment	0.134	0.014	-0.092	-0.040	-0.017	0.237	-0.059	0.256	0.083	1.000	0.081
Staffsize	0.368	0.262	0.112	0.159	0.139	0.119	-0.084	0.277	0.283	0.081	1.000
Budget	0.554	0.491	0.003	0.257	0.480	0.179	-0.092	0.260	0.359	0.035	0.457
AldrichMcAtee	0.737	0.530	-0.001	0.102	0.511	0.263	-0.079	0.663	0.568	0.434	0.566
Admin	0.245	0.186	0.179	0.092	0.135	-0.007	-0.117	0.091	0.117	0.071	0.486
Cand	0.245	0.229	0.013	0.158	0.132	0.006	-0.158	0.155	0.120	0.068	0.487
Fund	0.211	0.090	0.109	0.162	0.135	0.049	-0.063	0.099	0.033	-0.029	0.209
Media	0.183	0.045	0.156	0.132	0.084	0.042	-0.056	0.098	-0.009	0.179	0.542
Other	0.032	0.087	0.023	-0.018	-0.046	-0.188	-0.054	0.092	-0.009	0.013	0.262
Cont	0.232	0.081	0.096	0.064	0.142	-0.201	-0.088	0.132	0.152	-0.005	0.068
Tran	0.158	0.239	0.082	0.121	0.095	-0.154	-0.062	0.129	0.098	0.043	0.399
Un	-0.047	-0.030	-0.157	-0.190	-0.058	0.102	-0.036	-0.015	0.104	0.081	0.036
Total	0.258	0.184	0.114	0.144	0.140	-0.015	-0.126	0.143	0.100	0.094	0.517

Table 3.1 continued

	Budget	AldrichMcAtee	Admin	Cand	Fund	Media	Other	Cont	Tran	Un	total
Staffdivisions	0.554	0.737	0.245	0.245	0.211	0.183	0.032	0.232	0.158	-0.047	0.258
Professionalism	0.491	0.530	0.186	0.229	0.090	0.045	0.087	0.081	0.239	-0.030	0.184
Access	0.003	-0.001	0.179	0.013	0.109	0.156	0.023	0.096	0.082	-0.157	0.114
Publish	0.257	0.102	0.092	0.158	0.162	0.132	-0.018	0.064	0.121	-0.190	0.144
Polling	0.480	0.511	0.135	0.132	0.135	0.084	-0.046	0.142	0.095	-0.058	0.140
Voterid	0.179	0.263	-0.007	0.006	0.049	0.042	-0.188	-0.201	-0.154	0.102	-0.015
Issueleadership	-0.092	-0.079	-0.117	-0.158	-0.063	-0.056	-0.054	-0.088	-0.062	-0.036	-0.126
Service	0.260	0.663	0.091	0.155	0.099	0.098	0.092	0.132	0.129	-0.015	0.143
Cancont	0.359	0.568	0.117	0.120	0.033	-0.009	-0.009	0.152	0.098	0.104	0.100
Recruitment	0.035	0.434	0.071	0.068	-0.029	0.179	0.013	-0.005	0.043	0.081	0.094
Staffsize	0.457	0.566	0.486	0.487	0.209	0.542	0.262	0.068	0.399	0.036	0.517
Budget	1.000	0.786	0.445	0.413	0.344	0.265	0.163	0.316	0.353	0.036	0.433
AldrichMcAtee	0.786	1.000	0.294	0.328	0.292	0.248	0.074	0.209	0.253	-0.014	0.322
Admin	0.445	0.294	1.000	0.863	0.519	0.740	0.585	0.411	0.767	0.124	0.936
Cand	0.413	0.328	0.863	1.000	0.499	0.709	0.670	0.409	0.755	0.094	0.948
Fund	0.344	0.292	0.519	0.499	1.000	0.278	0.280	0.743	0.483	0.091	0.595
Media	0.265	0.248	0.740	0.709	0.278	1.000	0.608	0.117	0.662	0.082	0.827
Other	0.163	0.074	0.585	0.670	0.280	0.608	1.000	0.245	0.706	0.066	0.689
Cont	0.316	0.209	0.411	0.409	0.743	0.117	0.245	1.000	0.434	0.303	0.492
Tran	0.353	0.253	0.767	0.755	0.483	0.662	0.706	0.434	1.000	0.100	0.837
Un	0.036	-0.014	0.124	0.094	0.091	0.082	0.066	0.303	0.100	1.000	0.142
Total	0.433	0.322	0.936	0.948	0.595	0.827	0.689	0.492	0.837	0.142	1.000

Table 3.2 Correlation of Shares of Party Budget and Party Survey

	Staff divisions	Profess- ionalism	Access	Publish	Polling	Voterid	Issue leadership	Service	Cancont	Recruit- ment	Staffsize
Staffdivisions	1.000	0.328	0.124	0.085	0.338	0.094	-0.152	0.635	0.157	0.134	0.368
Professionalism	0.328	1.000	-0.015	0.030	0.174	0.159	-0.174	0.191	0.176	0.014	0.262
Access	0.124	-0.015	1.000	0.039	0.088	-0.121	0.180	0.031	0.068	-0.092	0.112
Publish	0.085	0.030	0.039	1.000	0.220	0.271	-0.195	0.004	0.058	-0.040	0.159
Polling	0.338	0.174	0.088	0.220	1.000	0.107	0.076	0.260	0.340	-0.017	0.139
Voterid	0.094	0.159	-0.121	0.271	0.107	1.000	-0.173	0.147	0.150	0.237	0.119
Issueleadership	-0.152	-0.174	0.180	-0.195	0.076	-0.173	1.000	-0.078	0.304	-0.059	-0.084
Service	0.635	0.191	0.031	0.004	0.260	0.147	-0.078	1.000	0.187	0.256	0.277
Cancont	0.157	0.176	0.068	0.058	0.340	0.150	0.304	0.187	1.000	0.083	0.283
Recruitment	0.134	0.014	-0.092	-0.040	-0.017	0.237	-0.059	0.256	0.083	1.000	0.081
Staffsize	0.368	0.262	0.112	0.159	0.139	0.119	-0.084	0.277	0.283	0.081	1.000
Budget	0.554	0.491	0.003	0.257	0.480	0.179	-0.092	0.260	0.359	0.035	0.457
AldrichMcAtee	0.737	0.530	-0.001	0.102	0.511	0.263	-0.079	0.663	0.568	0.434	0.566
AdminShare	-0.179	-0.127	-0.014	-0.013	-0.225	-0.062	-0.035	-0.154	-0.182	-0.073	-0.229
CandShare	0.252	0.168	-0.138	0.077	0.168	0.022	-0.141	0.055	0.082	-0.144	0.146
Fundshare	-0.070	0.040	-0.067	0.025	0.132	0.157	0.130	-0.036	-0.026	-0.155	-0.128
Mediashare	-0.079	-0.163	0.208	0.011	-0.004	0.103	0.086	0.001	-0.005	0.263	0.167
Othershare	-0.158	-0.041	-0.141	-0.184	-0.237	-0.221	-0.093	-0.006	-0.236	-0.040	-0.213
Contshare	0.161	0.138	0.039	-0.014	0.105	-0.125	0.033	0.133	0.181	-0.123	-0.033
Transhare	0.125	0.235	-0.002	0.241	0.037	-0.144	-0.055	0.158	0.040	-0.002	0.022
Unshare	-0.290	-0.102	-0.304	-0.499	-0.136	0.072	0.118	-0.086	0.053	0.185	-0.090

Table 3.2 continued

	Budget	Aldrich McAtee	Admin Share	CandShare	Fundshare	Media share	Othershare	Contshare	Transshare	Unshare
Staffdivisions	0.554	0.737	-0.179	0.252	-0.070	-0.079	-0.158	0.161	0.125	-0.290
Professionalism	0.491	0.530	-0.127	0.168	0.040	-0.163	-0.041	0.138	0.235	-0.102
Access	0.003	-0.001	-0.014	-0.138	-0.067	0.208	-0.141	0.039	-0.002	-0.304
Publish	0.257	0.102	-0.013	0.077	0.025	0.011	-0.184	-0.014	0.241	-0.499
Polling	0.480	0.511	-0.225	0.168	0.132	-0.004	-0.237	0.105	0.037	-0.136
Voterid	0.179	0.263	-0.062	0.022	0.157	0.103	-0.221	-0.125	-0.144	0.072
Issueleadership	-0.092	-0.079	-0.035	-0.141	0.130	0.086	-0.093	0.033	-0.055	0.118
Service	0.260	0.663	-0.154	0.055	-0.036	0.001	-0.006	0.133	0.158	-0.086
Cancont	0.359	0.568	-0.182	0.082	-0.026	-0.005	-0.236	0.181	0.040	0.053
Recruitment	0.035	0.434	-0.073	-0.144	-0.155	0.263	-0.040	-0.123	-0.002	0.185
Staffsize	0.457	0.566	-0.229	0.146	-0.128	0.167	-0.213	-0.033	0.022	-0.090
Budget	1.000	0.786	-0.257	0.261	0.057	-0.106	-0.188	0.125	0.331	-0.236
AldrichMcAtee	0.786	1.000	-0.306	0.227	0.047	0.008	-0.261	0.135	0.180	-0.144
AdminShare	-0.257	-0.306	1.000	-0.317	-0.010	-0.416	-0.023	-0.280	-0.127	-0.056
CandShare	0.261	0.227	-0.317	1.000	-0.108	-0.402	-0.205	-0.109	-0.072	-0.106
Fundshare	0.057	0.047	-0.010	-0.108	1.000	-0.254	0.176	0.143	-0.174	-0.008
Mediashare	-0.106	0.008	-0.416	-0.402	-0.254	1.000	-0.004	-0.306	-0.148	0.003
Othershare	-0.188	-0.261	-0.023	-0.205	0.176	-0.004	1.000	0.169	0.006	-0.077
Contshare	0.125	0.135	-0.280	-0.109	0.143	-0.306	0.169	1.000	0.196	-0.056
Transshare	0.331	0.180	-0.127	-0.072	-0.174	-0.148	0.006	0.196	1.000	-0.180
Unshare	-0.236	-0.144	-0.056	-0.106	-0.008	0.003	-0.077	-0.056	-0.180	1.000

Table 3.3 Correlation of Per Capita Party Budget and Party Survey

	Staff divisions	Profession- alism	Access	Publish	Polling	Voterid	Issue leadership	Service	Cancont	Recruit- ment	Staffsize
Staffdivisions	1.000	0.328	0.124	0.085	0.338	0.094	-0.152	0.635	0.157	0.134	0.368
Professionalism	0.328	1.000	-0.015	0.030	0.174	0.159	-0.174	0.191	0.176	0.014	0.262
Access	0.124	-0.015	1.000	0.039	0.088	-0.121	0.180	0.031	0.068	-0.092	0.112
Publish	0.085	0.030	0.039	1.000	0.220	0.271	-0.195	0.004	0.058	-0.040	0.159
Polling	0.338	0.174	0.088	0.220	1.000	0.107	0.076	0.260	0.340	-0.017	0.139
Voterid	0.094	0.159	-0.121	0.271	0.107	1.000	-0.173	0.147	0.150	0.237	0.119
Issueleadership	-0.152	-0.174	0.180	-0.195	0.076	-0.173	1.000	-0.078	0.304	-0.059	-0.084
Service	0.635	0.191	0.031	0.004	0.260	0.147	-0.078	1.000	0.187	0.256	0.277
Cancont	0.157	0.176	0.068	0.058	0.340	0.150	0.304	0.187	1.000	0.083	0.283
Recruitment	0.134	0.014	-0.092	-0.040	-0.017	0.237	-0.059	0.256	0.083	1.000	0.081
Staffsize	0.368	0.262	0.112	0.159	0.139	0.119	-0.084	0.277	0.283	0.081	1.000
Budget	0.554	0.491	0.003	0.257	0.480	0.179	-0.092	0.260	0.359	0.035	0.457
AldrichMcAtee	0.737	0.530	-0.001	0.102	0.511	0.263	-0.079	0.663	0.568	0.434	0.566
Admin2	-0.265	-0.181	0.241	0.137	-0.278	-0.118	0.048	-0.266	-0.159	-0.019	-0.064
Cand2	-0.129	-0.043	0.156	0.213	-0.048	-0.204	-0.068	-0.191	-0.111	-0.042	0.104
Fund2	-0.157	-0.049	0.073	0.186	0.084	0.125	-0.006	-0.093	-0.105	-0.105	-0.018
Media2	-0.148	-0.158	0.265	0.134	-0.033	-0.058	0.031	-0.104	-0.120	0.141	0.079
Other2	-0.195	-0.077	0.015	0.061	-0.179	-0.371	0.038	-0.035	-0.172	-0.021	-0.085
Tran2	-0.099	-0.015	0.074	0.107	-0.079	-0.410	0.082	0.007	-0.058	-0.081	0.016
Un2	-0.230	-0.090	-0.354	-0.393	-0.151	0.068	0.030	-0.121	0.016	0.160	-0.066
Cont2	0.060	0.045	0.061	0.103	0.082	-0.215	-0.024	-0.064	0.130	-0.088	-0.058

Table 3.3 continued

	Budget	Aldrich McAtee	Admin2	Cand2	Fund2	Media2	Other2	Tran2	Un2	Cont2
Staffdivisions	0.554	0.737	-0.265	-0.129	-0.157	-0.148	-0.195	-0.099	-0.230	0.060
Professionalism	0.491	0.530	-0.181	-0.043	-0.049	-0.158	-0.077	-0.015	-0.090	0.045
Access	0.003	-0.001	0.241	0.156	0.073	0.265	0.015	0.074	-0.354	0.061
Publish	0.257	0.102	0.137	0.213	0.186	0.134	0.061	0.107	-0.393	0.103
Polling	0.480	0.511	-0.278	-0.048	0.084	-0.033	-0.179	-0.079	-0.151	0.082
Voterid	0.179	0.263	-0.118	-0.204	0.125	-0.058	-0.371	-0.410	0.068	-0.215
Issueleadership	-0.092	-0.079	0.048	-0.068	-0.006	0.031	0.038	0.082	0.030	-0.024
Service	0.260	0.663	-0.266	-0.191	-0.093	-0.104	-0.035	0.007	-0.121	-0.064
Cancont	0.359	0.568	-0.159	-0.111	-0.105	-0.120	-0.172	-0.058	0.016	0.130
Recruitment	0.035	0.434	-0.019	-0.042	-0.105	0.141	-0.021	-0.081	0.160	-0.088
Staffsize	0.457	0.566	-0.064	0.104	-0.018	0.079	-0.085	0.016	-0.066	-0.058
Budget	1.000	0.786	-0.228	-0.032	-0.046	-0.151	-0.138	-0.006	-0.197	0.118
AldrichMcAtee	0.786	1.000	-0.302	-0.145	-0.081	-0.118	-0.203	-0.108	-0.166	0.054
Admin2	-0.228	-0.302	1.000	0.665	0.174	0.470	0.553	0.521	-0.032	0.094
Cand2	-0.032	-0.145	0.665	1.000	0.182	0.647	0.586	0.612	-0.013	0.252
Fund2	-0.046	-0.081	0.174	0.182	1.000	0.190	0.181	0.017	-0.005	0.229
Media2	-0.151	-0.118	0.470	0.647	0.190	1.000	0.407	0.375	0.000	0.012
Other2	-0.138	-0.203	0.553	0.586	0.181	0.407	1.000	0.854	-0.019	0.194
Tran2	-0.006	-0.108	0.521	0.612	0.017	0.375	0.854	1.000	-0.029	0.216
Un2	-0.197	-0.166	-0.032	-0.013	-0.005	0.000	-0.019	-0.029	1.000	0.027
Cont2	0.118	0.054	0.094	0.252	0.229	0.012	0.194	0.216	0.027	1.000

Table 3.4 Correlation of Indicators of Party Organizational Strength

	FACTION	MONEY RULES	CONTROL	REGIST- RATION	ENDORSE	PRIMARY	SURVEY	NETWORK CONT	PARTY CONT	PARTY CANSUM	CAUCUS
FACTION	1.000	0.193	-0.317	-0.239	0.382	-0.041	0.023	-0.252	0.056	0.027	0.144
MONEYRULES	0.193	1.000	0.000	0.012	0.216	0.076	0.048	-0.143	-0.130	0.018	-0.130
CONTROL	-0.317	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.003	0.007	-0.021	0.261	0.042	-0.058	-0.028
REGISTRATION	-0.239	0.012	0.000	1.000	-0.086	0.687	-0.116	0.205	-0.055	0.043	-0.064
ENDORSE	0.382	0.216	0.003	-0.086	1.000	0.129	0.151	-0.153	-0.065	-0.053	0.256
PRIMARY	-0.041	0.076	0.007	0.687	0.129	1.000	0.125	0.118	-0.160	-0.055	-0.234
SURVEY	0.023	0.048	-0.021	-0.116	0.151	0.125	1.000	-0.049	-0.192	-0.077	-0.060
NETWORKCONT	-0.252	-0.143	0.261	0.205	-0.153	0.118	-0.049	1.000	0.028	0.248	-0.091
PARTYCONT	0.056	-0.130	0.042	-0.055	-0.065	-0.160	-0.192	0.028	1.000	0.506	0.100
PARTYCANSUM	0.027	0.018	-0.058	0.043	-0.053	-0.055	-0.077	0.248	0.506	1.000	0.178
CAUCUS	0.144	-0.130	-0.028	-0.064	0.256	-0.234	-0.060	-0.091	0.100	0.178	1.000

Table 3.5 Factor Analysis of the Indicators of Party Organizational Strength

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
FACTION	0.659	0.381	0.302	-0.040	0.192
MONEYRULES	0.325	0.424	0.019	-0.572	0.328
CONTROL	-0.562	0.062	-0.408	0.218	0.502
ENDORSE	0.346	0.599	0.156	0.342	0.453
PRIMARY	-0.477	0.450	0.650	-0.108	-0.104
SURVEY	0.111	0.366	-0.172	0.000	-0.210
NETWORKCONT	-0.653	-0.133	0.089	0.140	0.450
PARTYCONT	0.243	-0.709	0.342	-0.095	0.248
PARTYCANSUM	0.329	-0.623	0.476	0.030	0.189
CAUCUS	0.348	0.068	0.153	0.806	-0.153
REGISTRATION	-0.630	0.192	0.625	0.017	-0.144

Table 3.6 Correlations of Indicators of Party Organizational Strength, Democrats

	FACTION	MONEY RULES	CONTROL	REGIST- RATION	ENDORSE	PRIMARY	SURVEY	NETWORK CONT	PARTYCONT	PARTY CANSUM	CAUCUS
FACTION	1.000	0.089	-0.427	-0.134	0.401	0.012	0.001	-0.236	0.074	0.171	0.230
MONEYRULES	0.089	1.000	-0.144	0.012	0.190	0.074	0.077	-0.285	-0.112	-0.045	-0.146
CONTROL	-0.427	-0.144	1.000	-0.107	-0.192	-0.045	0.145	0.484	-0.174	-0.428	-0.359
REGISTRATION	-0.134	0.012	-0.107	1.000	-0.084	0.679	-0.185	0.237	-0.038	0.046	-0.137
ENDORSE	0.401	0.190	-0.192	-0.084	1.000	0.130	0.180	-0.082	-0.057	-0.083	0.251
PRIMARY	0.012	0.074	-0.045	0.679	0.130	1.000	0.187	0.152	-0.167	-0.090	-0.274
SURVEY	0.001	0.077	0.145	-0.185	0.180	0.187	1.000	-0.317	-0.151	-0.321	-0.135
NETWORKCONT	-0.236	-0.285	0.484	0.237	-0.082	0.152	-0.317	1.000	0.039	-0.076	-0.206
PARTYCONT	0.074	-0.112	-0.174	-0.038	-0.057	-0.167	-0.151	0.039	1.000	0.752	0.094
PARTYCANSUM	0.171	-0.045	-0.428	0.046	-0.083	-0.090	-0.321	-0.076	0.752	1.000	0.220
CAUCUS	0.230	-0.146	-0.359	-0.137	0.251	-0.274	-0.135	-0.206	0.094	0.220	1.000

Table 3.7 Correlations of Indicators of Party Organizational Strength, Republicans

	FACTION	MONEY RULES	CONTROL	REGIST RATION	ENDORSE	PRIMARY	SURVEY	NETWORK CONT	PARTYCONT	PARTY CANSUM	CAUCUS
FACTION	1.000	0.311	-0.120	-0.359	0.382	-0.102	0.003	-0.417	0.064	-0.160	0.067
MONEYRULES	0.311	1.000	0.144	0.012	0.242	0.078	-0.027	0.025	-0.149	0.053	-0.115
CONTROL	-0.120	0.144	1.000	0.107	0.172	0.061	0.099	0.313	0.185	0.412	0.261
REGISTRATION	-0.359	0.012	0.107	1.000	-0.088	0.694	0.059	0.187	-0.073	0.053	0.009
ENDORSE	0.382	0.242	0.172	-0.088	1.000	0.129	0.159	-0.242	-0.080	-0.027	0.259
PRIMARY	-0.102	0.078	0.061	0.694	0.129	1.000	0.023	0.086	-0.154	-0.052	-0.193
SURVEY	0.003	-0.027	0.099	0.059	0.159	0.023	1.000	0.009	-0.193	-0.489	0.046
NETWORKCONT	-0.417	0.025	0.313	0.187	-0.242	0.086	0.009	1.000	0.078	0.315	0.088
PARTYCONT	0.064	-0.149	0.185	-0.073	-0.080	-0.154	-0.193	0.078	1.000	0.585	0.099
PARTYCANSUM	-0.160	0.053	0.412	0.053	-0.027	-0.052	-0.489	0.315	0.585	1.000	0.242
CAUCUS	0.067	-0.115	0.261	0.009	0.259	-0.193	0.046	0.088	0.099	0.242	1.000

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF HOUSE CANDIDATES**

The key insight of Jacobson's Strategic Politicians Hypothesis (Jacobson 2001) is that local and national political conditions alone do not determine political success. Without a credible candidate, a party has little chance of winning a congressional contest even in otherwise favorable circumstances. If Jacobson is correct, the decision of candidates on whether to run for the House is of critical importance in understanding congressional elections.

Jacobson's theory is grounded in the perspective of political parties rather than candidates – he is concerned with how the decision of experienced candidates to enter (or not enter) a race affects the electoral fortunes of the Democratic and Republican parties. Jacobson's model is also primarily focused on how the national and local political balance between the parties influences candidate decision-making with respect to general election races involving incumbents. But as Maisel and Stone (2001b) note, a candidate's ability to win the party's nomination must be his first consideration, given that one must first win the primary before contesting a general election. Candidates must defeat their intra-party rivals in order to have the opportunity of defeating a vulnerable incumbent or competing for an open seat; and clearly the primary is of chief importance in challenging an incumbent of one's own party. Given that in political primaries the partisan profile of a district is of equal advantage to every candidate (since they are all in the same party), other factors must play a role in determining a candidate's decision to run. The probability of victory is of course of great importance (in accord with the Strategic Politicians

theory), but in primaries that probability is shaped by the behavior and characteristics of *candidates* as well as the demographic and political profile of the *district*.

The structure of the political party itself might play a role in this decision-making process. Candidates with little experience in politics may be disadvantaged in districts with organizationally strong parties, since the leadership of the party could take a dim view of a candidate who has not “paid his dues.” The party leadership might throw their weight behind a candidate with long-standing ties to the party. An organizationally diffuse party structure, on the other hand, might make it easier for a wealthy or well-known candidate to win the nomination, since there would be less potential for an opponent with organizational backing. Political parties have also traditionally attempted to reduce the number of candidates competing in primaries (Herrnson 1988), so we might also expect that organizationally strong parties would see fewer contested nominations.

Starting with this chapter I address the question of candidate entry into U.S. House races as it is shaped not just by local and national political conditions, but also by candidate characteristics and local political context, in particular party structure. I will examine the descriptive characteristics of the pool of House candidates between 1980 and 1998, to explore the role that partisan differences, time, and the types of congressional contests (open seat, primary challenges to incumbents, and general election challenges to incumbents) have in shaping candidate entry. In later chapters I will also test the ability of stronger political parties to dissuade competition.

## Operationalization

I begin by analyzing the kinds of candidates who enter contested primaries; uncontested nominees will be discussed in a later chapter. Most of the information discussed below has been gathered from the Congressional Quarterly (CQ) Weekly Reports campaign narratives discussed in Chapter 3. Therefore, detailed candidate information was only gathered for those candidates who faced primary opposition. Those who were nominated unanimously are not included in the data set below. It is important to note that ideological, group support, and candidate racial data are also excluded from the analysis. Examination of those influences will be reserved for discussion of the campaign rather than the process of candidate emergence. The data are also restricted to *non-incumbents*.

Candidate characteristics are grouped into a number of categories:

- Campaign Experience

- Former nominee for the district

- Ran before (in the primary)

- Ran for lower office

- Nominee for state office

- Elected Experience

- Elected to county office

- Former member of the House

- Elected to local office

- Elected to statewide office

- Elected to the state legislature

- Political Experience

Congressional aide

Federal official

Judge

Lobbyist

Local official

Party official

Political activist

Political aide (other than for Congress)

State official

- Professional Experience

Accountant

Business

Community Activist

Doctor

Law enforcement

Lawyer

Military

Owner of a business

Professor

Teacher

Union official

- Other

Celebrity

Dynasty (member of a political family)

Dynasty – incumbent (member of the incumbent’s family)

Females

Fringe candidates

Other backgrounds

Party Switchers

Perennial candidates

Scandal (candidates whose backgrounds are question)

Self –financed candidate

Wealthy

Self-financed candidates are defined as those candidates who have loaned or contributed large sums to their own campaigns. Following Steen (2006), I have incorporated loans from other sources into the total candidate contribution, as most of these loans are ultimately from the candidate. There are several differences between the “self-financer” variable in this study and previous works, however. Using the BCRA law as a standard, Steen defined self-financers as all those candidates that contributed \$50,000 or more to their own campaigns. She did not control for inflation, however, so I have divided the \$50,000 figure by the price deflator for the year 2002 (available from the Bureau of Economic Analysis). Because of inflation, \$50,000 in 2000 is the equivalent of roughly \$25,000 in 1980. Using a strict \$50,000 threshold for all years would therefore underestimate the number of self-financed candidates. An additional change involves the nature of candidate reporting. Steen used the by rept files available from the FEC, which only begin in 1990. As this would sharply truncate the data set (removing half of the cases), I have used the “Cansum” files, candidate summary files available from 1980 onward (with self-

financing data beginning in 1984). This data does not distinguish between primary and general election campaigns, so using simple self-financing totals would artificially inflate the number of self-financers in those instances when candidates competed in both the primary and the general election. To address this problem, I have divided self-financing totals for candidates who won the primary.

### All Candidates

Table 4.1 reports the number of candidates by category that ran in a contested primary for the period 1980-1998. Both the total number of candidates with each characteristic and the proportion each characteristic represents as a share of all candidates are included. In addition the total numbers and percentages of the aggregated categories are reported.

According to the results of Table 4,1, nearly 34% of all candidates who entered a contested primary had professional backgrounds that might improve a candidate's electoral success. Just over 20% had been elected to some sort of office, and a smaller share had run for office (6.1%) or had other political experience (9.4%).

Breaking down the aggregated categories into specific candidate characteristics reveals that the majority of those candidates who had served in elective office had done so in the state legislature (11.6% of the total), while substantial numbers of county elected officials (3%) and local elected officials (4.5%) ran as well. Only 59 (.7%) former members of the U.S. House ran in contested primaries over the twenty year period, and a smaller share of those elected to statewide office ran for the House (.5%). Because elective experience has usually been considered as the most important metric of candidate quality (Jacobson 2001, Krasno & Green

1988), it is relevant that only one-fifth of all candidates for the house possessed this crucial characteristic. This relatively low percentage underscores the ability of incumbents to deter serious rivals.

During the ten election cycles under examination, 436 candidates had previously won a primary for the House (3%) or contended for it (2.4%). A relatively small number of candidates had run for either lower offices (.4%) or higher offices (.3%). Candidates also possessed a variety of non-campaign and non-elective political experiences, either as aides to political figures (political and congressional aides equaling 3.3% of the total), or as federal (.8%), state (1.1%) or local (1.8%) appointees. Those active in electoral politics, either as volunteers (2.1%) or party officers (1.6%) also ran for congress. Finally, less than one percent of candidates had served as judges (.7%) or worked as lobbyists (.6%).

Of the many professional backgrounds included in the dataset, lawyers were by far the most common, with 874 running for the U.S. House between 1980 and 1998: almost 11% of all candidates. The other professional backgrounds were widely distributed, with executives (4.4%), businessmen (2.3%), farmers (2.6%), business owners (3.2%), professors (3%), and teachers (2.9%) being the most common. There were fewer accountants (.3%), community activists (.8%), members of law enforcement (.7%), union officials (.4%), or those with military backgrounds (1.6%).

A number of miscellaneous categories were also included. Women made up just under 10% of all candidates (9.8%), part of the long-term under-representation of women in American politics. The fact that women constituted such a small percentage of candidates for the House is likely a contributing factor to the small number of women in the House during the 1980-1998 period. Candidate characteristics that will be used as controls in subsequent chapters include

fringe candidates (.2%), party switchers (.6%), perennials (.3%), and those damaged by some form of scandal (.3%). The number of wealthy, celebrity, or dynasty candidates was relatively small. Only 61 candidates could be defined as celebrities (.8%), and 143 were related either to the incumbent (.3%) or other past or present officeholders (1.5%). Candidates coded with the “wealthy” variable, drawn from the CQ campaign narratives, comprised approximately 1% of all candidates. The more liberal definition of candidate wealth, candidate self-financing, represented a much larger proportion of congressional candidates. Between 1980 and 1998, 949 candidates (14.9%) contributed \$50,000 or more to their own campaigns.

### Candidates Over Time

Looking at the sum of candidates from each category that ran during the entire era conceals important distinctions, however. One important factor is the question of time. In some years a large number of candidates sought election to the U.S. House, while other years were comparatively quiet, with only small numbers of candidates.

As shown in Figure 4.1, the number of candidates varied widely from one election cycle to another. From a gradual decline from 1980 to 1990, there was a surge in the number of candidates in 1992, followed by another decline through the year 1998. Supporting the work of Hetherington et al. (2003) and Carson et al. (2006), the number of candidates was considerably higher after re-districting, with steadily fewer candidates the closer one came to the next re-districting. Figure 1 also divides the sample between the two political parties, which reveals important differences. In early years more candidates ran in Democratic than Republican primaries, with the gap shrinking dramatically in 1990, after which the relationship was reversed.

The change may owe something to the Republican takeover of Congress in 1994, but the causal direction is unclear from the data presented in Figure 4.1.

Dividing the pool of candidates by experience produces relationships close to that demonstrated in the aggregate (see Figures 4.2a thru 4.2j). In most categories, the number of candidates declined during the 1980's, reached a peak in 1992, and declined thereafter. These results are somewhat misleading, however, as the total number of candidates in each category over time is less meaningful than the proportion of candidates of each sort of background. Looking at the percentage of candidates from each background leads to very different results (see Figures 4.3a thru 4.3j).

Figure 4.3a measures the percentage of candidates from each category (campaign, elected, political, and professional experience) over time. The trend lines are relatively stable. Elected officials constituted between 15% and 25% of the total number of candidates, reaching highs in the redistricting years of 1982 and 1992 – precisely when they would have had the best chance to win. Candidates with campaign experience, on the other hand, reached peaks in 1980, 1990, and 1996, with the smallest shares of candidates in the mid-eighties and 1998, periods of less political volatility. Political experience had a very different pattern, with the greatest share reached in 1988. Finally, candidates with only professional experience ran for the U.S. House most often between 1988 and 1994, with another peak in 1998. The data suggest that candidates with elective experience to some extent may have pushed out candidates with other forms of experience, with the “lower quality” candidates more likely to run for the House when officeholders were absent from congressional primaries.

Throughout the entire period between 1980 and 1998, state legislators made up the largest percentage of U.S. House candidates as opposed to other officeholders, with peaks in

1982 and 1992. Candidates elected to local and county offices generally followed the same trend. The divergence between local and county elected officials was particularly large in 1980 and 1998, when far more local than county officeholders ran for the House. It is possible that county officeholders were either more heavily recruited when fewer state legislators were running, or that they sensed an opportunity when state legislators were comparatively uncommon. The year 1988 in particular saw the smallest gap between the number of county and state legislative officeholders. Former members of the House and candidates elected to statewide office demonstrated no clear pattern.

Other characteristics also demonstrated interesting results. The pattern of candidate entry among candidates with campaign experience is strikingly consistent, with 1980-82, 1992, and 1996 witnessing the largest percentage of candidates who had been statewide nominees, former nominees for the House, or run for the House in previous elections. The share of congressional aides followed the pattern as state legislators, with the highest proportion in 1982 and 1992. Lawyers constituted a fairly stable proportion of the candidate pool (between 10% and 12%) except for a singular drop in the year 1986. Candidates from political families, on the other hand, ran most frequently in 1980, 1986, and 1990-94, with sharp declines in 1984 and 1988. Fringe candidates made up a disproportionate share of the candidate pool in 1990, but were still just over 1% of all candidates.

Despite the so-called “year of the woman” in 1992, that year did not represent a dramatic increase in the proportion of all candidates that were female. In fact between 1990 and 1998 the percentage of female candidates was virtually unchanged. The real increase in the number of women had come much earlier, rising from a low of 6% in 1980 to 11% in 1984, followed by a mild decline to 1988 of 8%, after which the numbers stabilized. The percentage of self-financed

candidates was relatively stable over time, ranging between 14% and 15%, with a high in 1998 of around 17% of all candidates. The proportion of candidates coded as “wealthy” was also stable, around 1% of all candidates between 1980 and 1990, until a decline in 1992.

### Candidates by Seat Status

Organizing the data by year could be considered somewhat artificial, however. 1982 and 1992, years in which large numbers of experienced candidates ran for the House, were noted not just for volatile national political environments, but because as re-districting years there were a large number of open seats. In this section I analyze the distribution of candidates by seat status, divided into three types: in-party races, open races, and out-party races. In-party races are those in which an incumbent is being challenged in the primary. Open races are those in which there is no incumbent running. This categorization excludes races in which an incumbent has been defeated in the primary (which would be an in-party race), since when candidates make the decision to enter a congressional contest, they can usually expect an incumbent to be re-nominated. Finally, out-party races are those nomination contests to determine which candidate will face the incumbent in the general election. The results are presented in Table 4.2. Between 1980 and 1998, there were 1673 candidates who ran in in-party races, 2501 candidates in open races, and 3888 candidates in out-party races. The larger number of out-party races is to be expected, since most incumbents run for re-election and are more likely to face general election than primary competition. Between 1980 and 1998, there were only 649 contested open seat primaries, with a total of 2501 candidates (an average of 4 per seat). During the same period there were 1123 contested in-party races, with 1673 candidates (an average of 1.5). By contrast,

there were 1421 contested out-party primaries with 3888 candidates (for an average of 2.7). The data therefore suggest that the presence of incumbents has a deterrent effect on any competition – not just experienced opponents.

As would be predicted by the Strategic Politicians Hypothesis, a far larger proportion of politically experienced candidates ran in open races, where there is no incumbent in either the primary or the general. Whether for candidates with elective (35%), campaign (8.2%), or other political experience (11.9%), candidates with nearly every political characteristic constituted a larger share of all candidates in open seat races than when an incumbent was present. The only exceptions are candidates who ran in previous House primaries and political activists, both of whom comprised a greater share of candidates in intra-party challenges to incumbents (3.5% and 2.9%, respectively). Approximately equal proportions of former House members ran in open seats or against incumbents in the primary.

Even more impressive are the absolute numbers, with a majority (53.9%) of all elected officials who ran for Congress running for open seats. Just over 21% of all candidates for open seats were state legislators, with another 7% having served in local office and 5% county office. For candidates with campaign experience and political experience, roughly equal numbers ran in open and out-party primaries: 204 for open and 215 for out-party races for those with campaign experience, and 297 to 321 for those with political experience. Along similar lines, celebrities (1.2%), women (11.2%), dynasty candidates (a combined 3.6%), the wealthy (1.6%), and most especially self-financers (19.2% of the total number of candidates) ran most often for open seats.

Candidates with principally professional (rather than political) experiences displayed a much more mixed distribution. While community activists (1%) and lawyers (12.1%) were most common in open seat primaries, candidates from other professions ran in other types of races.

Those with law enforcement (.8%) and teaching (3.9%) backgrounds most often appeared in in-party challenges. The bulk of other professions ran in out-party primaries: accountants (.3%), businessmen (2.6%), doctors (2.3%), executives (4.6%), farmers (2.9%), business owners (3.6%), professors (3.9%), and union officials (.6%). It is possible that candidates without explicitly political backgrounds were running in the absence of more experienced candidates, a question I will explore further later.

### Candidates by Party

Another obvious distinction among candidates is political party. The Democratic and Republican Parties have very different constituencies and demographic bases of support, dissimilar internal political structures (Herrnson 2000).

According to the data presented in Table 4.3, between 1980 and 1998, there were 4311 non-incumbent candidates in contested Democratic primaries, and 3751 Republicans. Leaving aside for the moment the question of which party is advantaged by that differential, it is clear from the data presented in Figure 3.6 that the parties attract candidates with different characteristics. Arnold & Hawkins (2002) have noted that these difference with respect to the winners of open seat primaries. The more complete data set in this study of all primary candidates underscores the divergent character of the political party's candidates.

At the aggregate level, a higher percentage of Democratic candidates had elected experience (21.3% to 18.9%) or political experience (9.9% to 8.7%). The Republicans, on the other hand, had a higher proportion of candidates with campaign (6.5% to 5.7%) and professional (35.5% to 33%) experiences. Given the advantages accruing officeholders in

election campaigns, this difference likely accounts for some of the success of the Democratic Party in maintaining a congressional majority for most of the period in question. The greater number of experienced Democratic candidates becomes even clearer upon closer examination. Of the types of elected experience, more Democrats had been elected to local (5% to 3.9%), statewide (.6% to .4%), and state legislative office (12.3% to 10.7%). Only in the case of former members (.9% to .7%) did the Republicans have an advantage, while the proportion of county elected officials was approximately equal (3%).

The greater share of Republican candidates with campaign experience was heavily weighted towards former nominees for Congress (3.8% to 2.2%). A larger share of Democrats ran in previous primaries (2.8% to 2.1%) and for lower office (.4% to .3%), while the shares of state nominees were roughly the same (.3%). With respect to political experience, relatively more Democratic primary candidates were congressional aides (2.2% to 2.1%), judges (1% to .5%), local officials (2% to 1.6%), political activists (2.4% to 1.8%), political aides (1.2% to 1%) and state officials (1.2% to 1.1%). More Republicans were federal officials (1.1% to .6%), lobbyists (.6% to .5%), and party officials (1.7% to 1.5%).

A relatively larger proportion of Republican than Democratic candidates had exclusively professional backgrounds, with the Republicans having a preponderance of accountants (.4% to .2%), businessmen (3% to 1.8%), doctors (3% to 1.4%), executives (6% to 3%), those in law enforcement (.8% to .6%) and in the military (2.1% to 1.1%), and business owners (4% to 2.6%). Some professional backgrounds produced a greater share of Democratic candidates, however: community activists (.84% to .77%), lawyers (11.5% to 10.1%), professors (3.6% to 2.2%), teachers (3.5% to 2.2%), and union officials (.7% to 0%). Interestingly, the partisan distribution of professional backgrounds by *candidates* resembles the partisan distribution of the interest

groups. Those in the military, business, and doctors are more likely to vote for Republicans, while teachers, lawyers, professors, and union officials are more likely to support Democrats.

Finally, a greater proportion of Republican candidates were celebrities (.8% to .7%), party switchers (.9% to .4%), wealthy (1.2% to .7%), and self-financed candidates (15.8% to 14.1%). A greater percentage of those in political dynasties (2.1% to 1.4%) and women (11.3% to 8.1%) ran as Democrats, as well as fringe (.3% to .03%), perennial (.4% to .2%), and scandal-ridden (.5% to .1%) candidates.

In Table 4.4, I present tests of the statistical significance of the differences in candidate backgrounds between the two parties using a chi-square test. A number of the divergent relationships are substantial enough to reach statistical significance at the .05 level. A statistically significantly greater share of Democrats than Republicans had elected experience, while the converse is true for candidates with professional experience. Closer analysis within categories indicates other statistically significant relationships. Among those with elected experience, Democrats had a significantly greater share of those with local or state legislative backgrounds. Republicans had significantly more former nominees, while more Democrats ran in previous primaries. Among the elements of political experience, more Democratic than Republican candidates ran in primaries who have been judges or political activists, while more federal officials ran as Republicans. Most of the items of professional experience also demonstrated statistical significance, with relatively more accountants, businessmen, doctors, executives, military personnel, and business owners running in Republican primaries; and more farmers, professors, teachers, lawyers, and union officials running in Democratic primaries. In the case of union officials, the lack of any of these candidates running in Republican primaries may bias the Pearson's chi-square results. Finally, of those backgrounds reaching the statistically

significant .05 level, more dynasty candidates, women, and fringe candidates were Democrats, while more party-switchers, wealthy, and self-financed candidates were Republicans. The Republicans also had significantly more candidates with no identifiable or politically relevant characteristics, the “other” category.

The aforementioned tests of statistical differences between the parties need to be treated cautiously, however. The lambda scores, indicating the Proportion Reduction in Error (PRE), indicate that, while statistically significant, the relationships are fairly weak. In most case the PRE is 0, and never exceeds 3%. This should not be entirely surprising, since political party alone is the not the sole determinant of a candidate’s decision to enter a primary. Nevertheless, the results are at best *suggestive* of a partisan distinction in candidate emergence.

### Party Differences Over Time

Given the importance that Jacobson and others place on the presence of candidates with elective experience, I have included analyzed their presence in the race, with data presented in Figures 4.4a and 4.4b.

The data included in Figure 4.4a and 4.4b comprise both those candidates running in contested primaries **and** general election challengers who did not have primary competition. The latter data were generously made available by Jacobson himself. In his research, Jacobson studied only general election contests, which excludes candidates who ran in the primary but were unsuccessful. The results of Figures 4 and 4b are substantially different from Jacobson’s, since it includes a broader universe of candidates. The approach employed here is, I believe, a more accurate method of testing the Strategic Politicians Hypothesis than that used by Jacobson.

The Strategic Politicians Hypothesis asserts that the entry of experienced candidates is the crucial mediating factor between the overall political environment and specific electoral results. While the theory is based on the individual decision-making of candidates, Jacobson's measurement, by failing to account for candidates who were not nominated, measures not candidate decision-making, but the outcomes of primary competition – an entirely different phenomenon that could be shaped by a whole host of factors other than national political tides.

The information presented in Figure 4.4a indicates the differences in the total number of candidates with elective experience who ran for office between 1980 and 1998, and 4.4b presents the difference between the parties in the share of candidates in each party who had been elected to office (whether at the state, federal, county, or local level). This category represents the “Jacobson” measure of candidate quality, with which Jacobson attempts to explain the pattern of congressional elections during the 1980's and 1990's. Jacobson (2001) argues that a combination of candidate recruitment and national political forces explains the outcomes of house elections between 1980 and 1998. According to Jacobson, the Republicans had a candidate quality advantage in 1980 and 1994. Both parties fielded strong challengers in 1982 and 1992, while neither party did so in 1984-90 or 1996-1998.

Figures 4.4a and 4.4b do not entirely accord with Jacobson's account, however. Looking at the total number of “quality” candidates as defined by Jacobson (i.e., those with elective experience), the Democrats enjoyed an advantage in every year but 1990 and 1998. An examination of the percentage of a party's candidates with previous service in elected office leads to somewhat different results, with the Democrats having a greater proportion of quality candidates in 1980-82, 1988, and 1992-98. Republicans had a greater proportion of experienced

candidates in 1984, 1986, and 1990 – each of which Jacobson states are years when neither party fielded particularly strong candidates.

Figures 4.4c and 4.4d measure the degree of Democratic advantage. The first indicates that the Democrats enjoyed a major numerical advantage in the number of experienced candidates who ran for congress in contested primaries until 1990, with a high point in 1982. The Republicans had a mild advantage in the number of quality candidates in 1990, and thereafter the Democrats fielded more experienced candidates in every election, with a major advantage in 1992 and 1996, the latter of which was a year Jacobson claims the Democrats had trouble recruiting strong candidates. Figure 4d paints a different picture. In relating the gap between the parties in the share of their candidates with elective experience, the Democrats enjoyed strong percentages of experienced candidates in 82, 1986, and since 1992, while the Republicans had an advantage in 1984 and 1990. The results for the years 1984 and 1996 run entirely counter to Jacobson's version of events: contra Jacobson, those were years in which a re-elected President's party had an *advantage* in the number of quality candidates, not a disadvantage as Jacobson claims.

Furthermore, the chi-square results in Table 4.5 demonstrate that in most years, there is no statistically significant difference between the two parties with respect to the number of "quality" candidates. Only in 1982 and 1996 does the p-value reach the .05 level, in both of which the Democrats enjoyed an advantage. Once again, these were years that Jacobson claims the Democrats had a weak field.

There is an important caveat to the results presented above, however: the measure of what proportion of a party's candidates have served in elective office may be of less relevance than the total number. The party's candidates (and resources) might be targeted on a fewer

number of competitive contests. The parties might be “clearing out” primaries for their favorite candidates, leading to a decline in the total number of candidates and a consequent increase in the share of candidate quality. I will discuss this issue more in a chapter.

Finally, the analysis presented in this section supplements and modifies, rather than directly overturns, Jacobson’s results. Jacobson’s study indicates that the Republicans managed to *nominate* a greater share of experienced candidates in 1980 and 1994, which appears to have had a major role to play in the Republican successes of those years. However, this study demonstrates that the Democrats usually had a greater number of experienced candidates who decided to run. The party suffered not because it did not have enough good candidates, but because those candidates either lost their primaries or were inefficiently distributed.

#### Party Differences By Seat Status

As with the differences in the overall distribution of candidates, part of the difference between the two parties may be a function of seat status. For most of the period between 1980 and 1998, the majority of House seats were held by Democrats, which could be the cause of the differences between the two parties. Examining the descriptive data demonstrates pronounced differences between the two parties. While the parties had roughly similar numbers of candidates in open contests, and Republicans a slight edge in the number of out-party candidates (understandable given their minority status during most of the period). Nearly three-quarters of all candidates challenging incumbents in the primary were Democrats. The larger number of Democratic incumbents might be a partial cause of this discrepancy, but the sheer size of the

difference (1234 candidates to 439) points to greater internal divisions, and a greater readiness to challenge sitting officeholders, within the Democratic Party.

In Table 4.6 below I have present the results of an examination of the possibility of a difference between the process of candidate emergence between the two parties with respect to seat status.

The results of the chi-square test indicate that, even after controlling for seat status, partisan differences with respect to candidate emergence remain. There were few statistically significant differences in the kinds of candidates who ran in out-party races with respect to the broad range of political experience. There is a greater distinction between the parties in out-party races regarding professional and “other” characteristics, however. Accountants, businessmen, doctors, executives, military personnel, and self-financers ran significantly statistically more often in Republican primaries. Lawyers, teachers, union officials, and women ran more often in Democratic out-party primaries. In in-party races, the Democrats saw a relatively greater proportion of candidates with political experience, while Republicans had a larger number of those with professional experience. Community activists and judges more often ran in the primary against Democratic incumbents, while business owners and those in law enforcement were more likely to challenge Republican incumbents in the primary.

Open seat elections witness the greatest distinction between the parties. Once again the parties statistically diverge on the share of elected officials (for Democrats) and those with professional experience (for Republicans). Republicans see more former nominees among those with campaign experience, as well as a statistically significantly larger proportion of party-switchers, doctors, executives, military personnel, and business owners. Alternatively, Democrats witness a statistically larger number of state legislators and local officeholders, as

well as judges, women, professors, teachers, union officials, and the scandal-ridden. These differences suggest that the different candidate profiles, while shaped in part by the larger number of Democratic incumbents during most of the 1980-1998 period, are also influenced by the inherent differences between the two parties.

## Discussion

While not a complete study of the universe of candidates running for congress between 1980 and 1998 (since it excludes incumbents and candidates in uncontested primaries), the descriptive analysis presented in this chapter does suggest that the differences between the two major political parties are more than just ideological. While the Democratic majority between 1980 and 1994 accounts for part of the differences, with more Democratic candidates challenging incumbents in the primary and more Republican candidates contending for out-party nominations, the distinction between the two parties is not entirely accounted for by party control. The disproportionate number of primary challenges to Democratic incumbents reinforces the commonly held perspective that the Democrats are a more fractious and disunited party, while the Republicans are relatively more unified. It is unclear from purely descriptive analysis whether these divisions have any consequences for general elections, but at the minimum Democratic incumbents have to face contested primaries more often than their Republican counterparts. The mere presence of a challenger forces an incumbent to spend time and resources on securing the nomination, and could make it more difficult for incumbents to paper over intra-party differences.

The era of Democratic dominance in the House lasted for forty years (1954-1994), with this data set comprising the end of that period and the beginning of a dozen years of Republican rule. The changes in majority party status were partly reflected in the data, as the Democrats consistently out-performed their Republican opponents with respect to the number and quality of candidates running for House seats. The Republicans fielded candidates with less political experience (whether office-holding or campaigning), which could explain why the Democrats were able to maintain their majority status despite Republican victories at the Presidential level. But while one might expect that Republican successes during the 1990's were due to stronger candidates, the data does not support this hypothesis. In general, the Democrats continued to field more candidates with elective experience, whether measured in absolute numbers or proportionately. Despite being in the minority, the Democrats continued to attract experienced and potentially formidable candidates for the House. Their ability to do so may be a statistical illusion, caused by aggressive negative recruitment by the Democratic national campaign committees, i.e., "clearing out" the primary so that the party's favorite candidates would be unopposed in the primary. Another possibility is that the Democrats were able to stem the magnitude of their losses by continuing to field superior candidates, and perhaps winning seats that would otherwise have gone Republican. In other words, the Republicans might have enjoyed much larger majorities if they had been able to close the "quality gap" in House elections.

The disparate professional backgrounds of the parties' candidates reflect the political base of the two parties. While the Republicans have traditionally drawn much of their financial and electoral support from executives, business owners, white-collar professionals, and other high-SES groups, the Democrats have relied on labor unions and the legal profession. The fact that a substantial share of candidates reflects this distribution of political support could reinforce

the ideological character of the two parties. However, the coding of professional status is somewhat misleading, since it does not include those who have been elected to office.

Furthermore, the data suggest that the differences between the parties go beyond ideology and majority status – that they have two very different organizational cultures. While relative party organizational strength is not dealt with in this chapter, the professional backgrounds of the candidates for office reveal important distinctions between the two parties. The Democrats appear to be a party composed of elective officials, while the Republicans consistently produce candidates with less explicitly political backgrounds. This variation could be caused either by organizational strength or organizational weakness. It could be the case that a strong Democratic organization is recruiting stronger candidates, and empowered by the greater resources accompanying majority status; or it could be that the Democrats are dominated by their own elective officials, giving them a weak institutional structure vis-a-vis the Republicans. These possibilities will be explored in later chapters.

Table 4.1. Total Number of Candidates by Category

Category	Total by Category	% of all Candidates
campaign experience	489	6.07%
elected experience	1624	20.14%
political experience	754	9.35%
professional experience	2752	34.14%
Category	Total by Category	% of all Candidates
county elected	240	2.98%
former member	59	0.73%
local elected	360	4.47%
state elected	42	0.52%
state legislature	932	11.56%
Category	Total by Category	% of all Candidates
former nominee	239	2.96%
ran before	197	2.44%
ran lower	28	0.35%
state nominee	27	0.33%
Category	Total by Category	% of all Candidates
congressional aide	176	2.18%
federal official	64	0.79%
judge	58	0.72%
lobbyist	44	0.55%
local official	142	1.76%
party official	127	1.58%
political activist	169	2.10%
political aide	92	1.14%
state official	92	1.14%

Table 4.1 continued

Category	Total by Category	% of all Candidates
accountant	23	0.29%
business	189	2.34%
community activist	65	0.81%
doctor	175	2.17%
executive	353	4.38%
farmer	210	2.60%
law enforcement	55	0.68%
lawyer	874	10.84%
military	128	1.59%
owner	261	3.24%
professor	240	2.98%
teacher	235	2.91%
union official	32	0.40%
Category	Total by Category	% of all Candidates
celebrity	61	0.76%
dynasty	121	1.50%
dynasty incumbent	22	0.27%
Female	790	9.80%
fringe	13	0.16%
other	2537	31.47%
party switcher	50	0.62%
perennial	23	0.29%
scandal	27	0.33%
self financer	865	13.58%
wealthy	76	0.94%

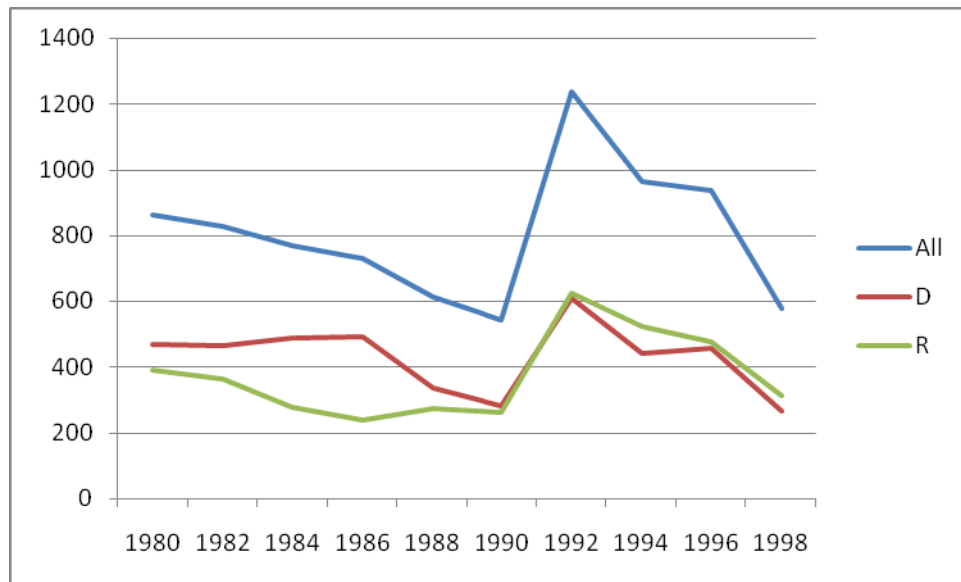


Figure 4.1. Number of Primary Candidates by Party by Year

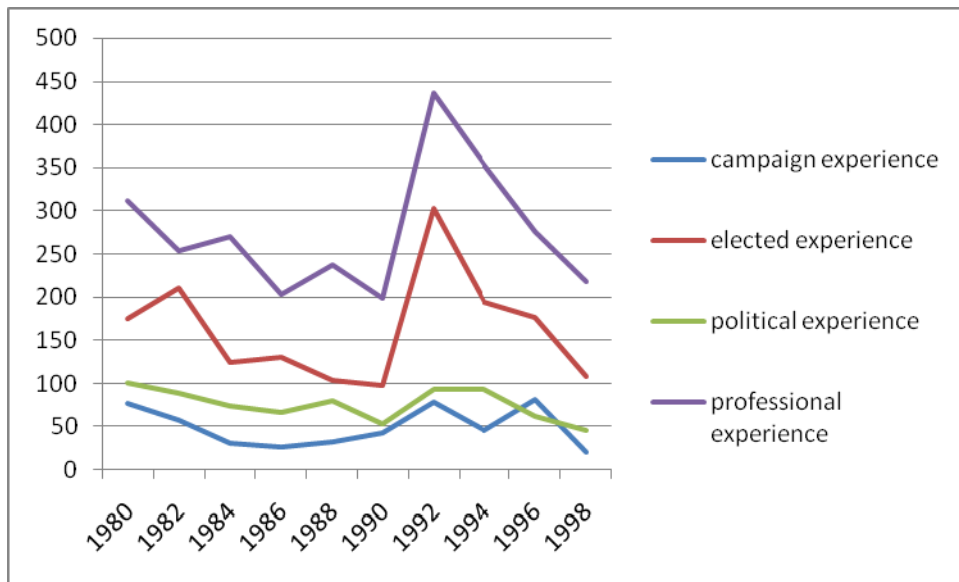


Figure 4.2a. Numbers of Primary Candidates by General Categories

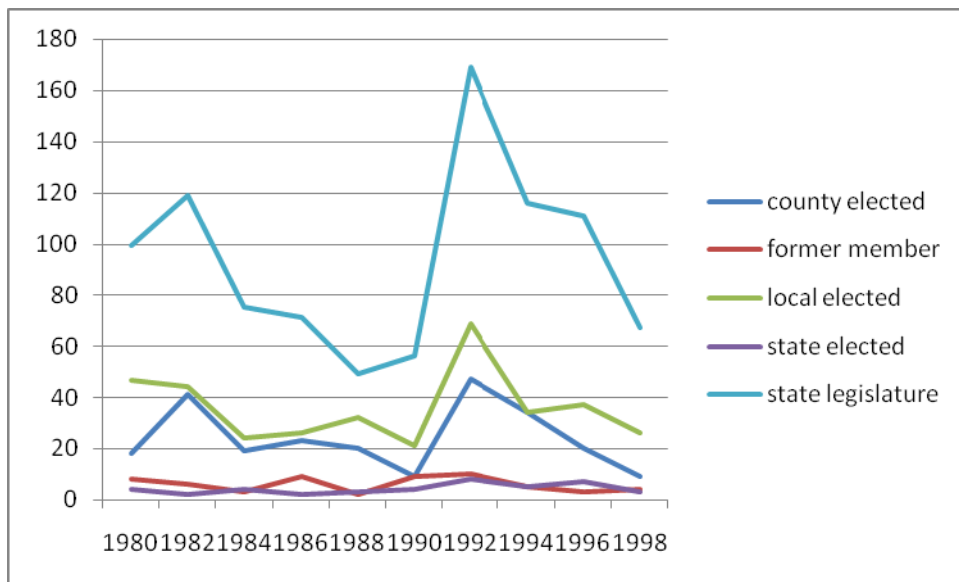


Figure 4.2b. Numbers of Primary Candidates by Types of Elected Experience

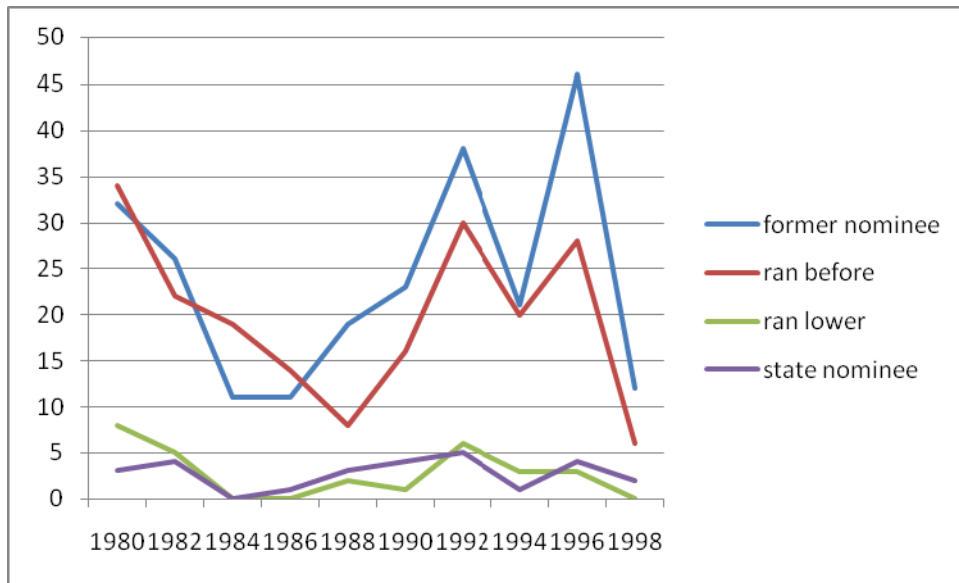


Figure 4.2c. Number of Candidates by Types of Campaign Experience

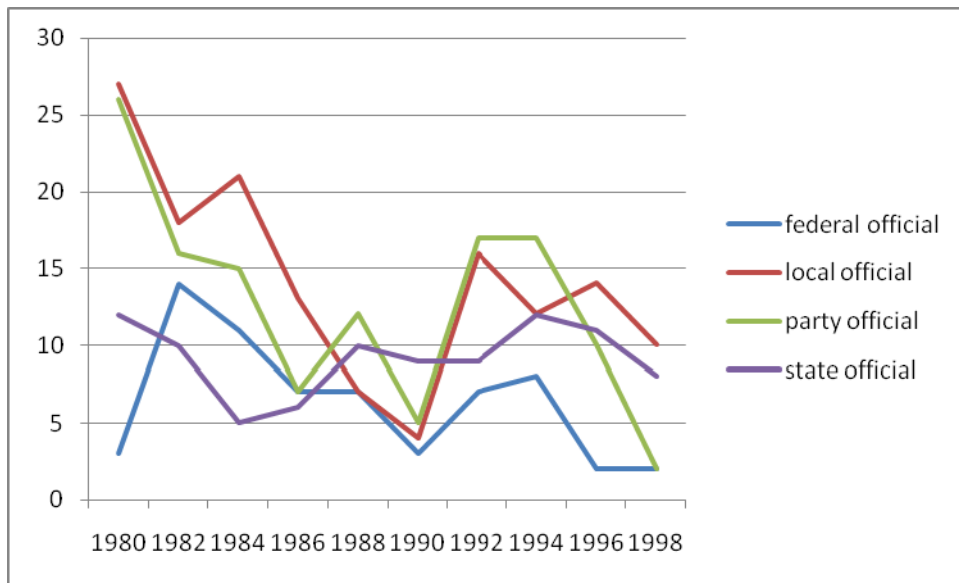


Figure 4.2d. Number of Candidates by Types of Political Experience I

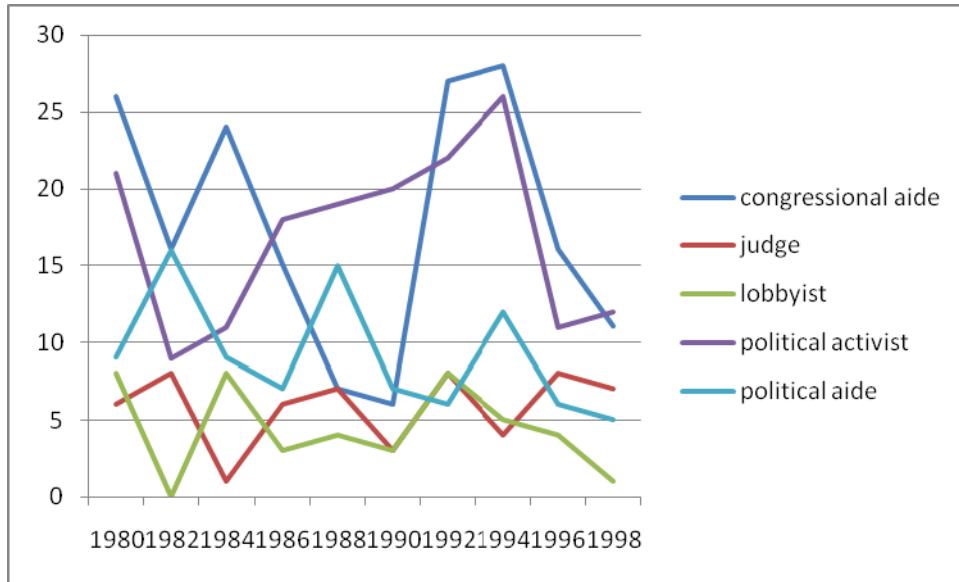


Figure 4.2e. Number of Candidates by Types of Political Experience II

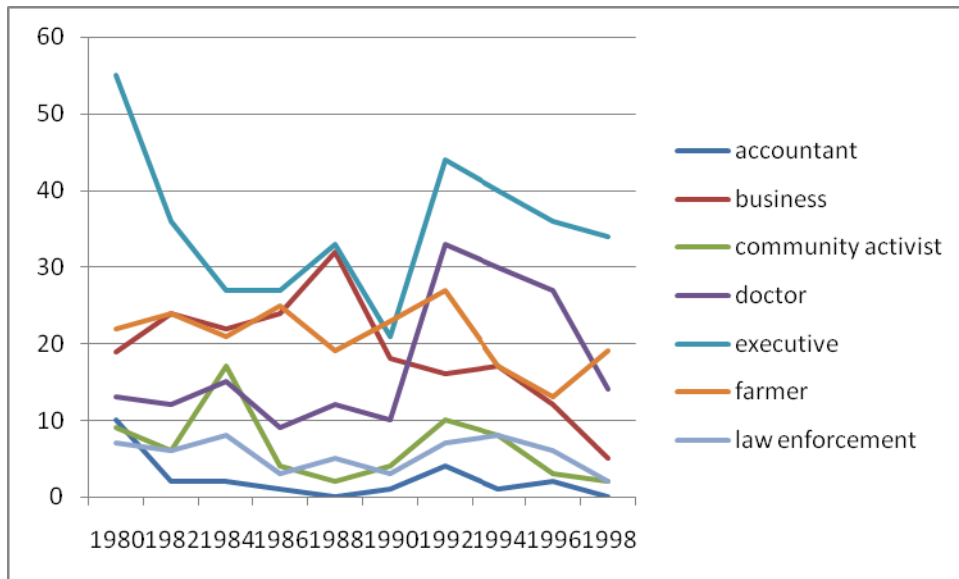


Figure 4.2f. Number of Candidates by Types of Professional Experience I

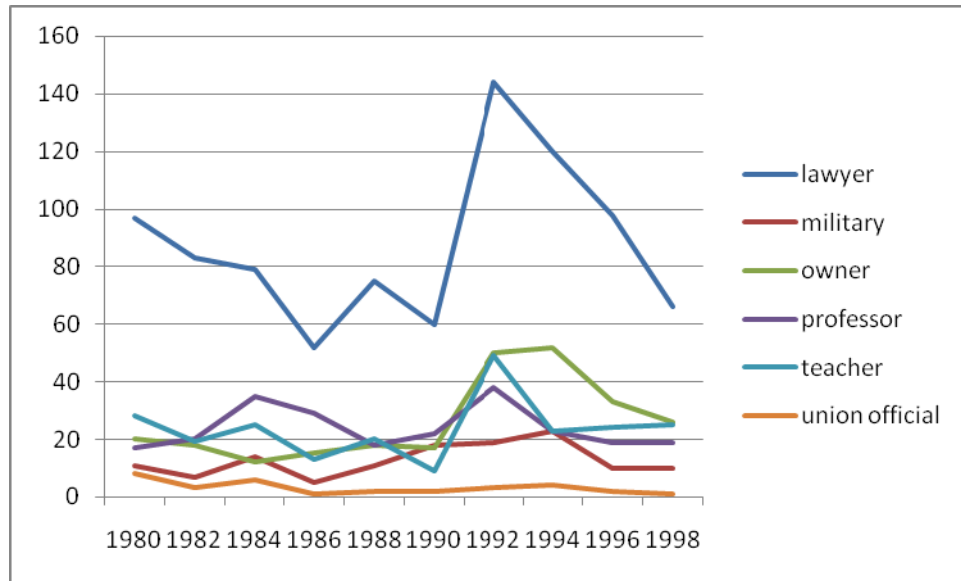


Figure 4.2g. Number of Candidates by Types of Professional Experience II

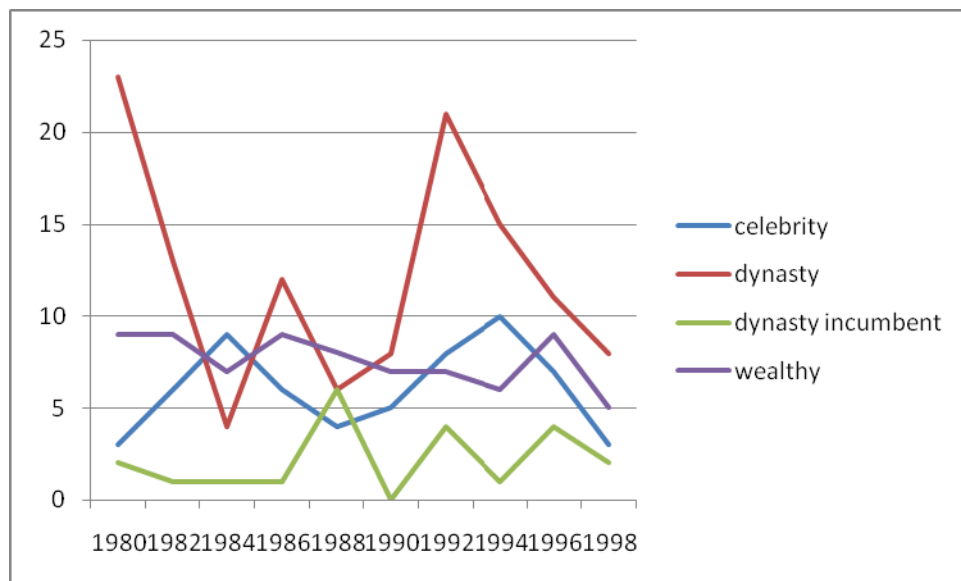


Figure 4.2h. Number of Candidates by Types of Other Experience I

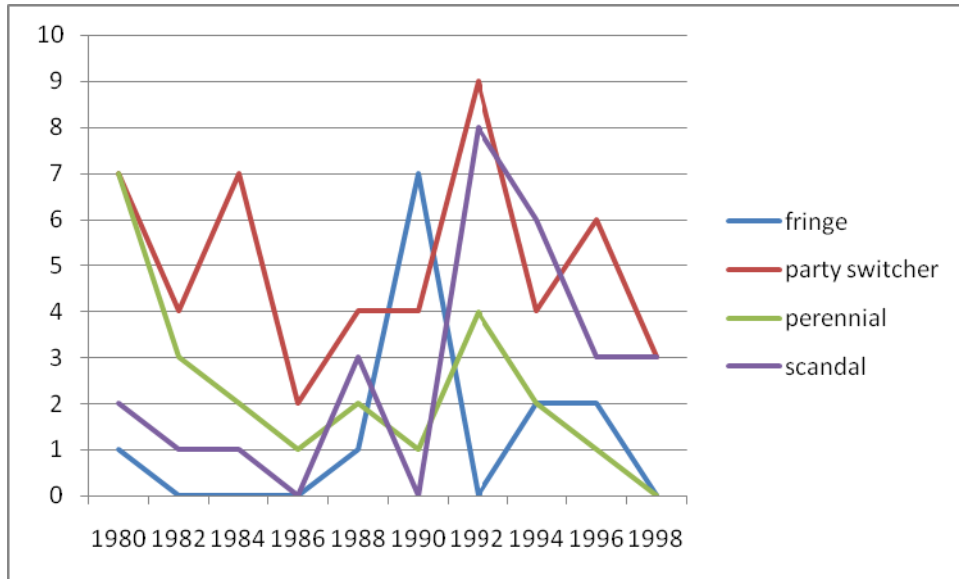


Figure 4.2i. Number of Candidates by Types of Other Experience II

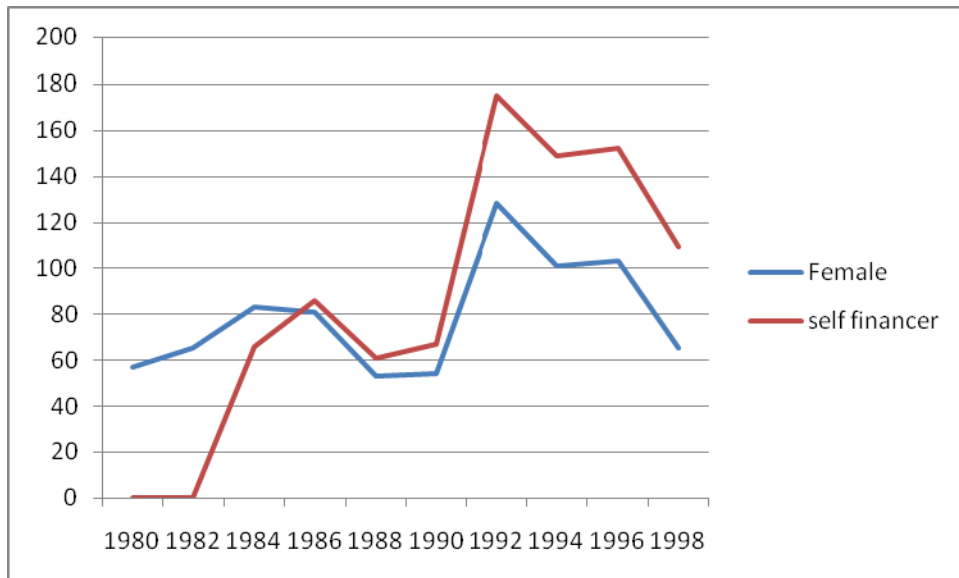


Figure 4.2j. Number of Candidates by Types of Other Experience III

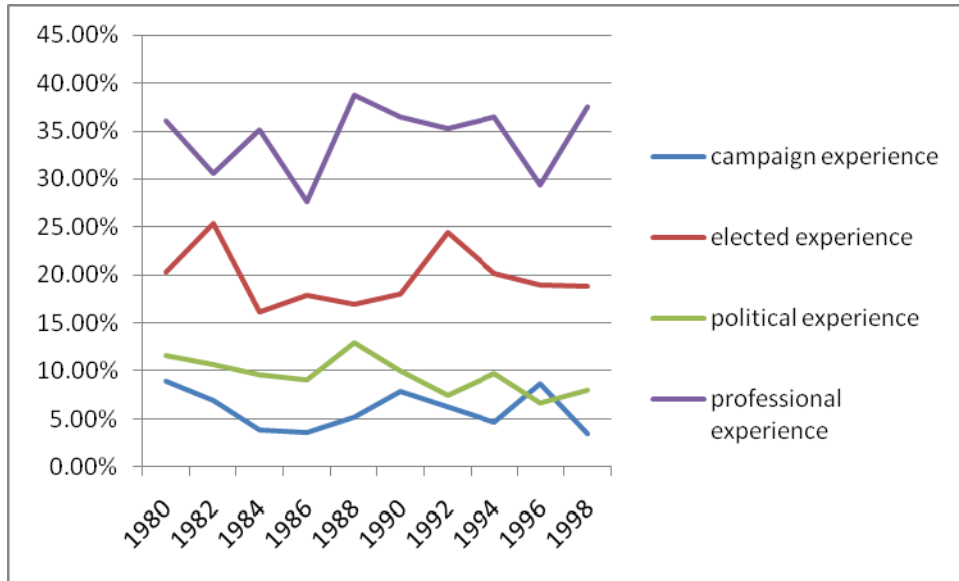


Figure 4.3a. Percentage of Candidates by General Category

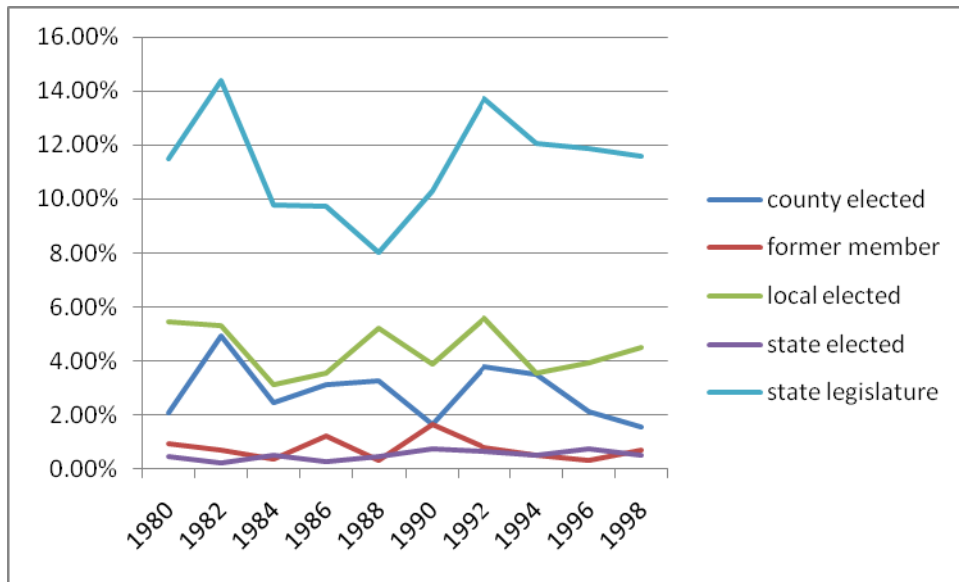


Figure 4.3b. Percentage of Candidates by Types of Elected Experience

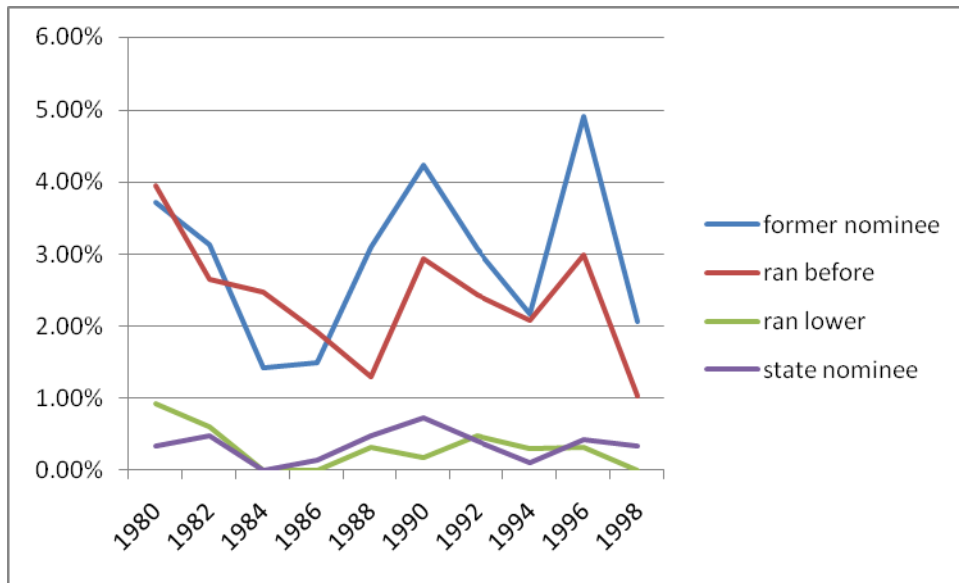


Figure 4.3c. Percentage of Candidates by Types of Campaign Experience

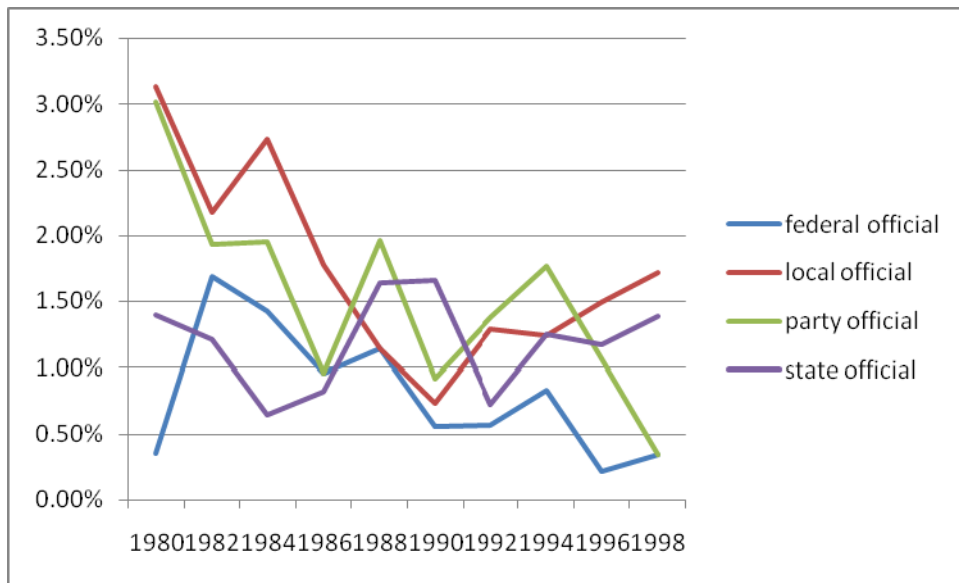


Figure 4.3d. Percentage of Candidates by Types of Political Experience I

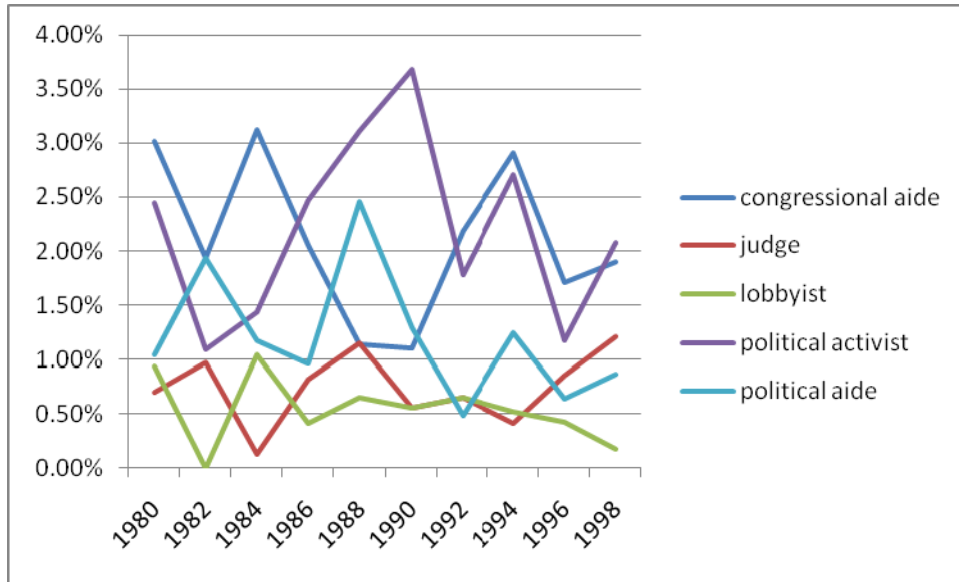


Figure 4.3e. Percentage of Candidates by Types of Political Experience II

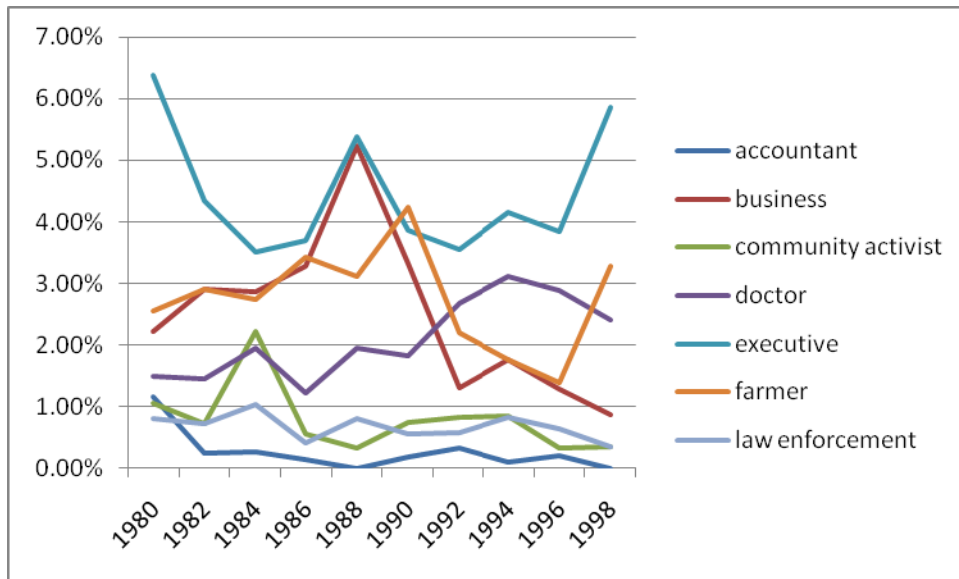


Figure 4.3f. Percentage of Candidates by Types of Professional Experience I

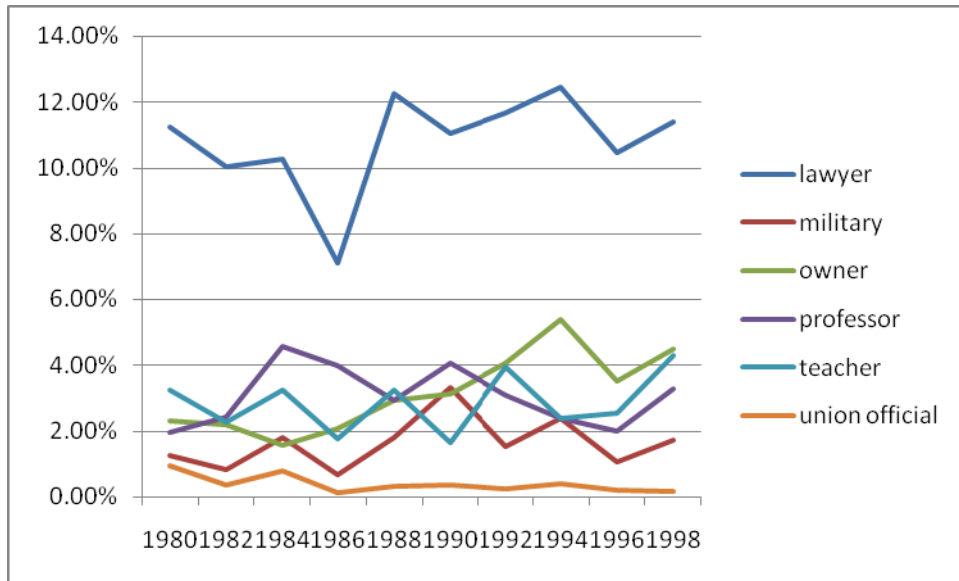


Figure 4.3g. Percentage of Candidates by Types of Professional Experience II

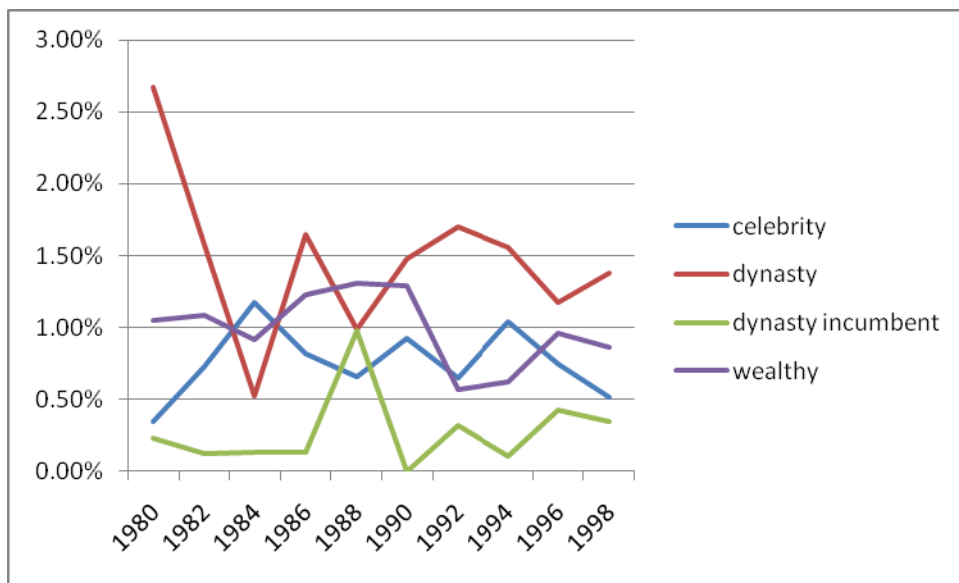


Figure 4.3h. Percentage of Candidates by Types of Other Experience I

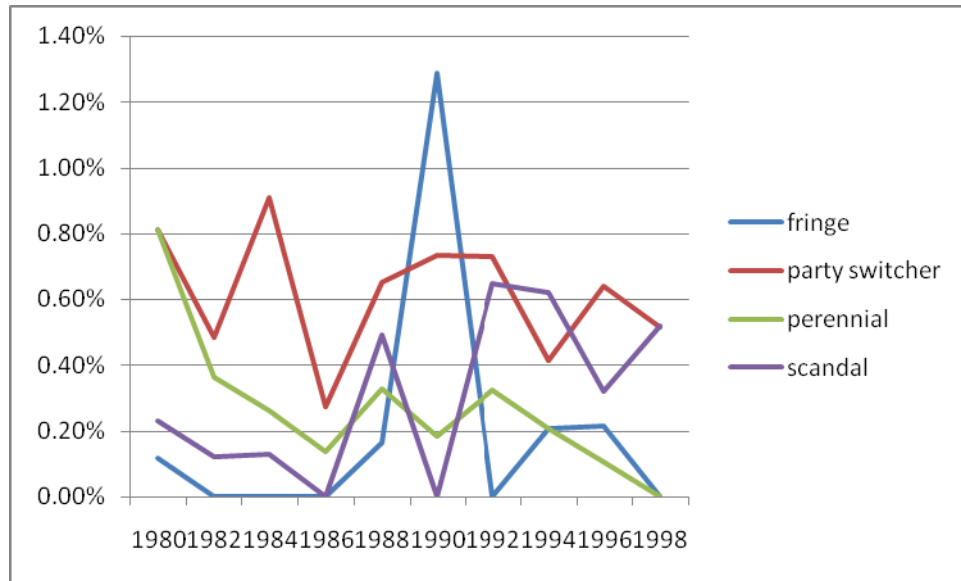


Figure 4.3i. Percentage of Candidates by Types of Other Experience II

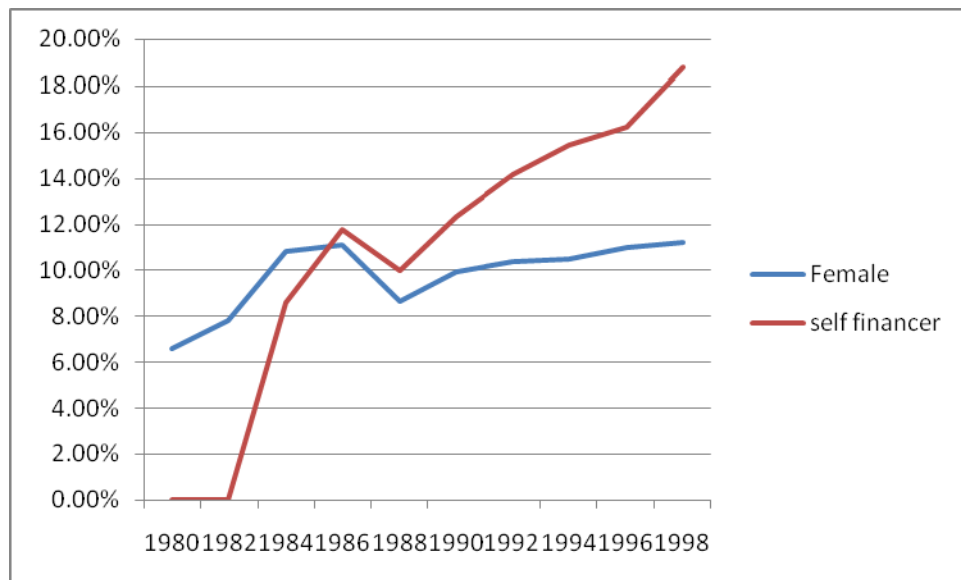


Figure 4.3j. Percentage of Candidates by Types of Other Experience III

Table 4.2. Candidate Backgrounds by Seat Status

Category	In-party	%In-party	Open	%Open	Out-party	%Out-party
campaign experience	70	4.18%	204	8.16%	215	5.53%
elected experience	227	13.57%	875	34.99%	522	13.43%
political experience	136	8.13%	297	11.88%	321	8.26%
professional experience	508	30.36%	819	32.75%	1425	36.65%
Category	In-party	%In-party	Open	%Open	Out-party	%Out-party
county elected	34	2.03%	114	4.56%	92	2.37%
former member	14	0.84%	21	0.84%	24	0.62%
local elected	61	3.65%	182	7.28%	117	3.01%
state elected	5	0.30%	29	1.16%	8	0.21%
state legislature	114	6.81%	535	21.39%	283	7.28%
Category	In-party	%In-party	Open	%Open	Out-party	%Out-party
former nominee	7	0.42%	105	4.20%	127	3.27%
ran before	59	3.53%	70	2.80%	68	1.75%
ran lower	3	0.18%	13	0.52%	12	0.31%
state nominee	1	0.06%	17	0.68%	9	0.23%
Category	In-party	%In-party	Open	%Open	Out-party	%Out-party
congressional aide	13	0.78%	92	3.68%	71	1.83%
federal official	4	0.24%	27	1.08%	33	0.85%
judge	11	0.66%	29	1.16%	18	0.46%
lobbyist	6	0.36%	17	0.68%	21	0.54%
local official	27	1.61%	47	1.88%	68	1.75%
party official	17	1.02%	62	2.48%	48	1.23%
political activist	48	2.87%	51	2.04%	70	1.80%
political aide	16	0.96%	34	1.36%	42	1.08%
state official	9	0.54%	48	1.92%	35	0.90%

Table 4.2 continued

Category	In-party	%In-party	Open	%Open	Out-party	%Out-party
accountant	4	0.24%	6	0.24%	13	0.33%
business	33	1.97%	57	2.28%	99	2.55%
community activist	17	1.02%	26	1.04%	22	0.57%
doctor	34	2.03%	51	2.04%	90	2.31%
executive	64	3.83%	109	4.36%	180	4.63%
farmer	35	2.09%	63	2.52%	112	2.88%
law enforcement	13	0.78%	17	0.68%	25	0.64%
lawyer	148	8.85%	302	12.08%	424	10.91%
military	18	1.08%	43	1.72%	67	1.72%
owner	57	3.41%	66	2.64%	138	3.55%
professor	32	1.91%	55	2.20%	153	3.94%
teacher	65	3.89%	52	2.08%	118	3.03%
union official	4	0.24%	6	0.24%	22	0.57%
Category	In-party	%In-party	Open	%Open	Out-party	%Out-party
celebrity	7	0.42%	30	1.20%	24	0.62%
dynasty	18	1.08%	67	2.68%	36	0.93%
dynasty incumbent	0	0.00%	22	0.88%	0	0.00%
Female	176	10.52%	280	11.20%	334	8.59%
fringe	5	0.30%	3	0.12%	5	0.13%
other	626	37.42%	533	21.31%	1378	35.44%
party switcher	4	0.24%	21	0.84%	25	0.64%
perennial	5	0.30%	4	0.16%	14	0.36%
scandal	6	0.36%	14	0.56%	7	0.18%
self financier	99	5.92%	438	17.51%	328	8.44%
wealthy	9	0.54%	41	1.64%	26	0.67%

Table 4.3. Candidate Backgrounds by Party

Category	D	%D	R	%R
campaign experience	246	5.71%	243	6.48%
elected experience	917	21.27%	707	18.85%
political experience	426	9.88%	328	8.74%
professional experience	1422	32.99%	1330	35.46%
Category	D	%D	R	%R
county elected	128	2.97%	112	2.99%
former member	28	0.65%	31	0.83%
local elected	214	4.96%	146	3.89%
state elected	26	0.60%	16	0.43%
state legislature	529	12.27%	403	10.74%
Category	D	%D	R	%R
former nominee	95	2.20%	144	3.84%
ran before	119	2.76%	78	2.08%
ran lower	18	0.42%	10	0.27%
state nominee	15	0.35%	12	0.32%
Category	D	%D	R	%R
congressional aide	96	2.23%	80	2.13%
federal official	24	0.56%	40	1.07%
judge	41	0.95%	17	0.45%
lobbyist	22	0.51%	22	0.59%
local official	84	1.95%	58	1.55%
party official	64	1.48%	63	1.68%
political activist	103	2.39%	66	1.76%
political aide	53	1.23%	39	1.04%
state official	52	1.21%	40	1.07%

Table 4.3 continued

Category	D	%D	R	%R
accountant	7	0.16%	16	0.43%
business	78	1.81%	111	2.96%
community activist	36	0.84%	29	0.77%
doctor	61	1.41%	114	3.04%
executive	128	2.97%	225	6.00%
farmer	139	3.22%	71	1.89%
law enforcement	25	0.58%	30	0.80%
lawyer	495	11.48%	379	10.10%
military	47	1.09%	81	2.16%
owner	112	2.60%	149	3.97%
professor	156	3.62%	84	2.24%
teacher	151	3.50%	84	2.24%
union official	32	0.74%	0	0.00%
Category	D	%D	R	%R
celebrity	31	0.72%	30	0.80%
dynasty	77	1.79%	44	1.17%
dynasty incumbent	15	0.35%	7	0.19%
Female	485	11.25%	305	8.13%
fringe	12	0.28%	1	0.03%
other	1289	29.90%	1248	33.27%
party switcher	18	0.42%	32	0.85%
perennial	16	0.37%	7	0.19%
scandal	22	0.51%	5	0.13%
self financier	418	12.38%	447	14.92%
wealthy	32	0.74%	44	1.17%

Table 4.4 Differences Between the Parties in Candidate Backgrounds

Category	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
campaign experience	2.098	0	R
elected experience	7.32*	0	D
political experience	3.061	0	D
professional experience	5.451*	0	R
Category	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
county elected	0.002	0	R
former member	0.864	0.001	D
local elected	5.401*	0	D
state elected	1.206	0	D
state legislature	4.575*	0	R
Category	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
former nominee	18.647*	0.012	D
ran before	3.901*	0	D
ran lower	1.32	0	D
state nominee	0.047	0	D
Category	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
congressional aide	0.083	0	D
federal official	6.616*	0.004	R
judge	6.96*	0	D
lobbyist	0.214	0	R
local official	1.876	0	D
party official	0.492	0	R
political activist	3.875*	0	D
political aide	0.64	0	D
state official	0.348	0	D

\*statistically significant at .05

Table 4.4 continued

Category	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
accountant	4.921*	0.002	R
business	11.584*	0.008	D
community activist	0.096	0	D
doctor	24.917*	0.013	R
executive	43.961*	0.024	R
farmer	14.016*	0	D
law enforcement	1.431	0.001	R
lawyer	3.942*	0	D
military	14.675*	0.009	R
owner	12.093*	0.009	R
professor	13.211*	0	D
teacher	11.311*	0	D
union official	27.954*	0	D
Category	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
celebrity	0.174	0	R
dynasty	5.1*	0	D
dynasty incumbent	1.918	0	D
Female	22.078*	0	D
fringe	7.893*	0	D
other	10.568*	0	R
party switcher	6.174*	0.004	D
perennial	2.401	0	D
scandal	8.542*	0	D
self financier	8.718*	0.008	R
wealthy	3.985*	0.003	R

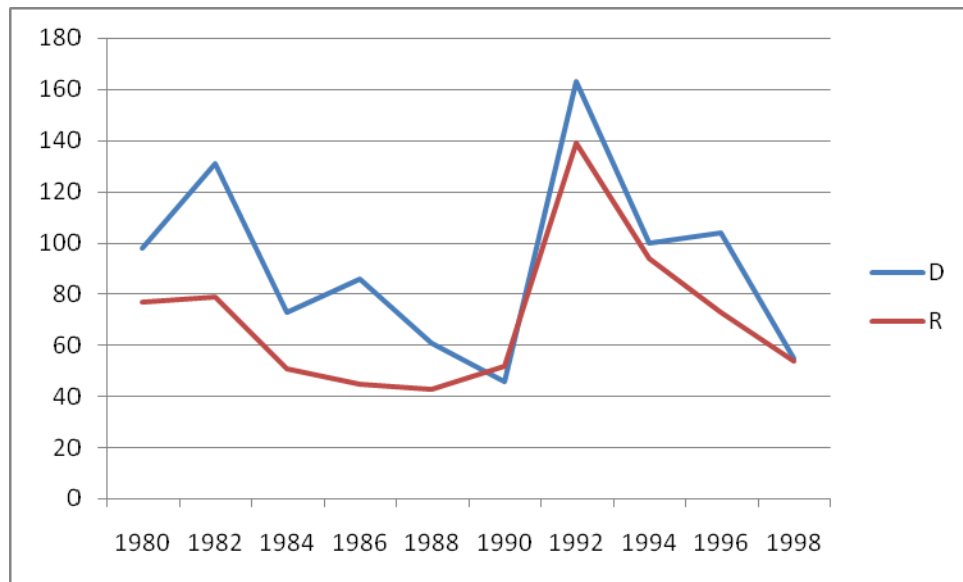


Figure 4.4a. Elected Experience by Party and Time (Totals)

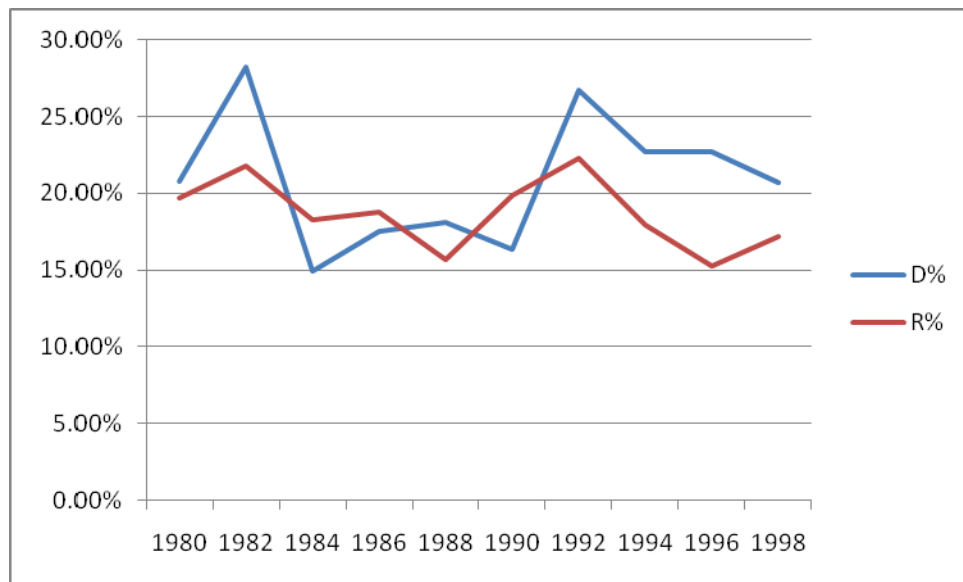


Figure 4.4b. Elected Experience by Party and Time (%)

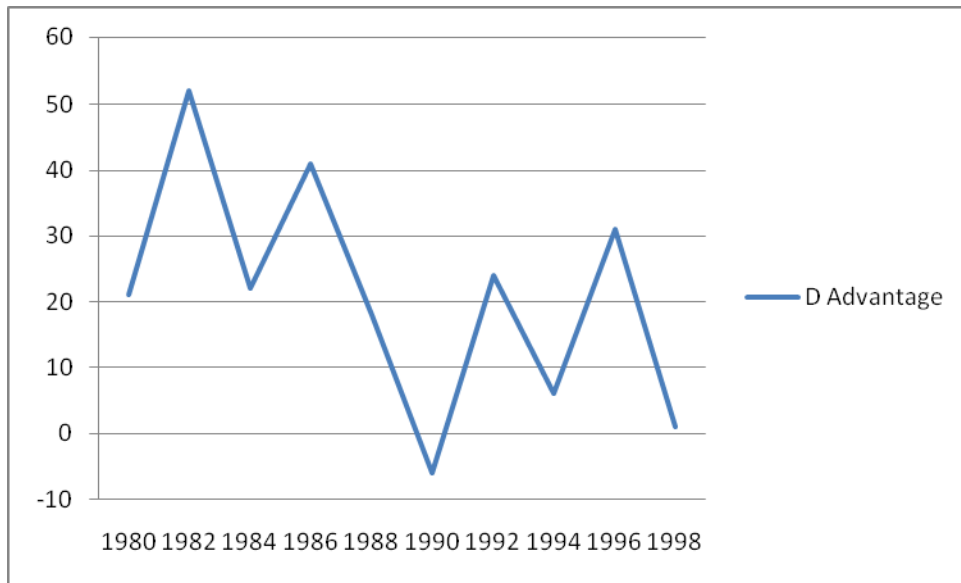


Figure 4.4c. Democratic Advantage by Totals

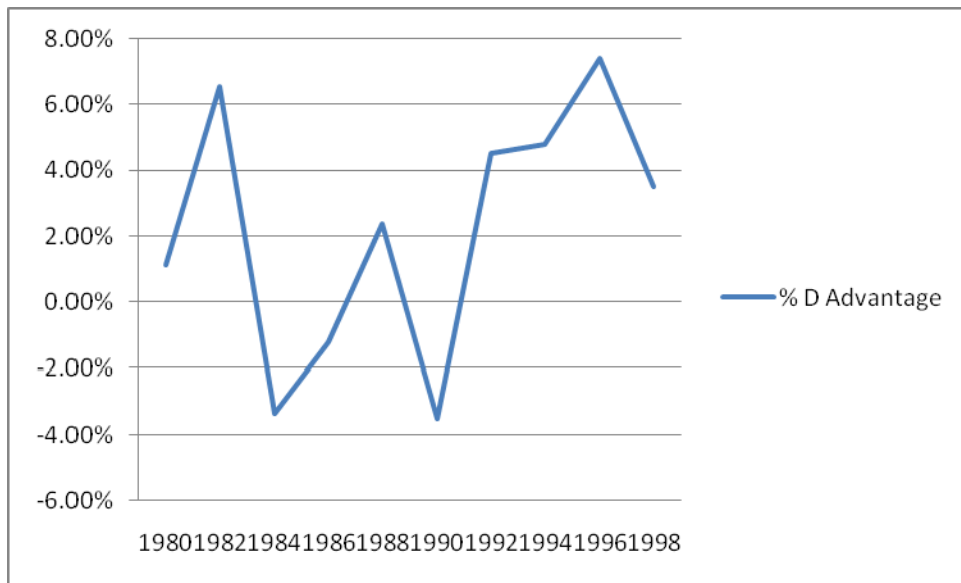


Figure 4.4d. Democratic Advantage by Share

Table 4.5. Party Differences in the Number of Quality Candidates by Time

	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
1980	0.164	0	D
1982	4.594*	0	D
1984	1.503	0	R
1986	0.167	0	R
1988	0.594	0	D
1990	1.149	0.017	R
1992	3.356	0.026	D
1994	3.411	0.099	D
1996	8.337*	0.049	D
1998	1.142	0.003	D

\*statistically significant at .05

Table 4.6. Differences in Candidate Backgrounds by Seat Status

	In-party			Open			Out-party		
Category	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
Campaign experience	2.22	0	D	1.257	0.008	R	0.934	0	R
Elected experience	0.005	0	R	12.601*	0.028	D	3.749	0.002	D
Political experience	7.746*	0	D	0.065	0	D	1.336	0	D
Professional experience	7.526*	0	R	5.379*	0.02	R	1.621	0	D
Category	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
County elected	1.47	0	R	0.608	0	D	0.072	0	D
Former member	0.04	0	R	0.537	0.002	R	0.778	0	R
Local elected	1.411	0	D	4.991*	0	D	0.473	0	D
State elected	0.101	0	D	0.714	0	D	0.83	0.001	D
State legislature	0.057	0	R	6.001*	0.01	D	4.716*	0.007	D
Category	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
Former nominee	0.02	0	R	5.134*	0.016	R	3.954*	0	R
Ran before	2.728	0	D	0.011	0	D	0.351	0	D
Ran lower	1.069	0	D	0.601	0	D	0.683	0.001	D
State nominee	2.813	0.002	R	1.321	0	D	0.015	0	R
Category	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
Congressional aide	0.139	0	R	0.476	0	D	0.932	0.002	D
Federal official	0.003	0	D	1.109	0.004	R	3.489	0	R
judge	3.939*	0	D	3.865*	0	D	0.603	0.001	D
lobbyist	0.285	0	D	0.097	0.001	R	0.11	0	R
Local official	0.001	0	D	0.388	0	D	2.475	0.004	D
Party official	1.859	0	D	1.345	0.006	R	0.007	0	R
Political activist	3.469	0	D	0.067	0.001	R	1.176	0.002	D
Political aide	1.576	0	D	0.353	0	D	0.023	0	D
State official	0.235	0	R	0.219	0	D	1.623	0.003	D

\*statistically significant at .05

Table 4.6 continued

Category	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
accountant	0.003	0	D	0.002	0	R	7.877*	0	R
business	0.069	0	D	2.558	0.009	R	10.649*	0	R
Community activist	6.11*	0	D	0.762	0.003	R	0.905	0	R
doctor	0.67	0	R	15.514*	0.021	R	11.424*	0	R
executive	1.485	0	R	26.736*	0.038	R	17.854*	0	R
farmer	0.005	0	D	2.333	0	D	19.51*	0.02	D
Law enforcement	8.434*	0.007	R	1.321	0	D	1.105	0	R
lawyer	0.052	0	R	2.364	0	D	6.155*	0.002	D
military	0.022	0	R	5.838*	0.012	R	7.552*	0	R
owner	21.236*	0.006	R	5.668*	0.014	R	0.291	0	R
professor	0.06	0	R	4.819*	0	D	18.392*	0.021	D
teacher	0	0	D	4.507*	0	D	7.073*	0.01	D
Union official	1.426	0	D	5.82*	0	D	25.506*	0.012	D
Category	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party	Chi2	$\lambda$	Party
celebrity	0.519	0	D	0.681	0.003	R	0.122	0	D
dynasty	2.152	0	D	2.173	0	D	2.063	0.003	D
Dynasty incumbent				2.677	0	D			
Female	0.881	0	D	12.351*	0.013	D	8.135*	0.012	D
fringe	1.784	0	D	2.907	0	D	2.265	0.002	D
other	0.007	0	R	7.409*	0.027	R	13.715*	0	R
Party switcher	0.003	0	D	4.194*	0.007	R	1.105	0	R
perennial	1.784	0	D	0.937	0	D	0.646	0.001	D
scandal	2.142	0	D	6.859*	0	D	0.322	0.001	D
Self financier	0.548	0	R	0.002	0	R	7.059*	0	R
wealthy	0.075	0	D	1.46	0.006	R	2.588	0	R

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AND NEGATIVE RECRUITMENT**

#### Background

It has become a commonplace (among political pundits and practicing politicians alike) that political parties benefit from having uncontested primaries. According to this idea, a candidate for Congress is advantaged by not having to spend precious resources competing for the nomination, resources that are especially critical when the nominee faces the prospect of challenging an incumbent in the general election. In addition, according to the divisive primaries theory (Hacker 1965), parties' general election prospects are undermined by messy intra-party conflict, which can alienate key constituencies and make it difficult for the eventual primary victor to re-assemble his fractured party coalition.

While there is only limited statistical evidence supporting the divisive primaries hypothesis for U.S. House races (Born 1981, Romero 2003), and some indication that contested primaries can help challengers to incumbents (Alvarez et al. 1995), the party leadership certainly appears to *believe* that multi-candidate primaries undermine party electoral success. There are a number of occasions in the CQ campaign narratives where the parties are described as having “cleared out” a primary by dissuading all but one candidate from running. This process is known as “negative recruitment” (see Herrnson 1988, Herrnson & Gimpel 1995), where parties actively discourage candidates from running, as opposed to positive recruitment, where parties attempt to persuade a candidate to make the race. Similarly, the effort to frontload presidential primaries

has been pursued in part so that the party can have a quick and painless nomination process, presumably so that the party is free to concentrate on the general election (Caesar & Busch 2005).

It may not matter what the party leadership wants, however. Under the classic definition of party strength, i.e., the machine model, the party leadership uses its power to reduce the number of primary candidates. On the other pole, candidate-centered or interest-group dominated parties would have no influence in the primaries whatsoever, since “the party” as a distinct institutional entity would scarcely exist. Service-oriented parties remain aloof from primary contests, waiting until a victor emerged to assist in their general election campaign. However, under the fourth type of party organization, the networking institution, in a strong party with a committed activist base, financial resources, and a distinct institutional identity, the party leadership would have less ability to prevent contested primaries. The existence of parties would give potential candidates the ability to build contacts and political support for their own nominations. In other words, outwardly strong parties would have *more* candidates for the nomination, not fewer.

Based on available evidence, an institutionally strong political party appears to reduce the number of candidates for the House, which would support the “machine” model of political party organizational strength. Herrnson and Gimpel (1995) constructed a model attempting to explain the causes of intra-party competition, using the number of primary candidates as one of their main dependent variables. They examined the effects of demography, district/primary type, and state and party factors, treating each party separately and restricting their study to the year 1984. The independent variables included in the Herrnson-Gimpel model are described below:

Demographic: urbanization, population diversity, geographic mobility,

and region (South, Midwest, Northeast, and West)

District/primary: partisan bias, Challenge (or in-party)/open/out-party primary

State: candidate pool, on-year elections

Party: endorsements, caucus state, local recruitment, national recruitment

Herrnson and Gimpel found substantial differences between the two parties. More Democrats ran in the primary in diverse districts and open seats, while fewer ran in the South and West, where the national parties engaged in recruitment, or in states with presidential caucuses rather than primaries. The Republicans had more primary candidates in urban areas, open seats, and in states with a high ratio of state legislative to congressional seats. They had few primary candidates for the House in primaries against incumbents, where the district favored the Democrats, or where the state parties endorsed before the primary. Herrnson and Gimpel's study is of course limited by its focus on a single year, and it excludes several potentially important measures of party institutionalization.

### Model Specification

I have adapted Herrnson and Gimpel's model for this study, expanding it to cover all primaries between 1980 and 1998 and modifying some of the variables. The dependent variable is the number of primary candidates between 1980 and 1998. Following Herrnson and Gimpel, this variable is logged to address skewness.

Among the control variables, district urbanization is drawn from Adler's Congressional District database (<http://sobek.colorado.edu/~esadler/districtdatawebsite/CongressionalDistrictDatasetwebpage.htm>). As suggested by, urbanized areas are expected to have more intense intra-party competition.

I have altered the authors' classification of Region. They included Maryland and Delaware in the South, but the postwar political pattern of those states aligns them more closely with the Northeast. I have therefore moved those two states from the South to the Northeast, with the rest unchanged. Herrnson and Gimpel hypothesized that the Northeast, with a legacy of strong party organizations, would have fewer primaries, while the traditionally one-party South would have more contested primaries. Their work did not support this hypothesis, however, with the South and West fielding far fewer candidates for the Democrats. One explanation for this result is Democratic weakness in these regions at the presidential level, which might lead the party to work to avoid multi-candidate primaries because the political odds were already stacked against them. Following the results of the previous study, the South and West are expected to have relatively fewer Democratic candidates.

The dummy variables for seat status are open, in-party primary, and out-party primary (which is the reference category). Open primaries are those where an incumbent is not on the ballot, where in-party primaries are those in which one is. More candidates are expected to run for open seats, with fewer challenging incumbents for the nomination, relative to out-party primaries.

District partisan bias is calculated by subtracting the party's performance in presidential election in that district from the national total, and then averaging the total over the entire redistricting period. For example, a district won by Walter Mondale in 1984 with 45% of the vote (+4 over his 41% national average) and by Michael Dukakis with 46% (the same as his national average) would have a district partisan bias of +2  $((4+0)/2)$ . While this method does technically entail using later election to predict the behavior of previous ones, it has the considerable virtue of measuring the general, underlying partisan predisposition of the district.

This measurement is also very similar to the Cook Partisan Voting Index (PVI). More candidates are hypothesized to run in those districts that favor their party, since winning the nomination in such a district makes one more likely to be elected.

I use a simplified version of the District Diversity Index. Herrnson and Gimpel included a range of economic variables (both income and professional), which are not easily available at the congressional district level, particularly for a study covering three redistricting periods. Instead, I have used the Congressional District dataset's measurement of percent foreign born, as well as the share of each district that is black or Hispanic (drawn from CQ Researcher – <http://library.cqpress.com/elections>), to develop an ethnic diversity index. I use the same model used by Herrnson and Gimpel, developed by Lieberman (1969) and also employed by Sullivan (1973) and Bond (1983):

$$A_w = 1 - \sum_{j=1}^v \sum_{k=1}^{P_j} \frac{Y_{kj}^2}{P_j}$$

Where:

$A_w$  = district diversity index

$V$  = total number of variables

$P_j$  = number of categories of the  $j^{th}$  variable

$Y_{kj}$  = proportion of the population of a category within a variable

Following Herrnson and Gimpel, I predict that more diverse districts produce more candidates, as there are greater ethnic cleavages within the district and hence a greater likelihood for ethnic-driven political rivalry within a party.

State opportunity structure is defined as the ratio between state legislative seats (both chambers) and U.S. House seats. This measure is designed to capture the effects of having a

relatively large (or small) number of elected officeholders. States with a large ratio of state legislative to house seats are hypothesized to have a larger number of candidates in U.S. House primaries, as there is a greater pool of potential candidates with a reasonable expectation of waging competitive campaigns.

There are several variables used by Herrnson and Gimpel that I have excluded from the model: on-year elections for state senate seats and party recruitment. The inclusion of senate seats up in presidential election years is inappropriate to this model, which extends across presidential and non-presidential election years. Herrnson and Gimpel's national and local party recruitment data were obtained by a survey of House candidates they conducted, which it was infeasible to replicate over the twenty years of congressional elections represented in this model.

I have included most of the principal methods of measuring party organizational strength described in Chapter Three: factionalism, state regulation of party contributions, convention delegate selection process, control of state government, pre-primary endorsement procedures, and party network contributions. Because party contributions to candidates and in-state party contributions are so highly correlated (especially when the data is divided by party), and because in-state party contributions are probably a better measure of state party organizational strength, I use the in-state party contributions only. In addition, since state primary rules and party registration are correlated, but measure slightly different elements, I have combined these two variables into an additive index (created by summing the standardized values of both variables). In the main model I have also excluded the averaged results of the Cotter et al./Herrnson-McAtee survey of state party chairs. Since there are only 55 state parties surveyed in both 1980 and 1998, the sample would be greatly restricted, which could bias the results. Using just the 1980 data is a

possibility (since they measure 90 state parties), but a variable from so early in the time period is unlikely to have a meaningful effect on the data.

The party strength variables are hypothesized to be negatively related to the number of candidates in House primaries. If party leaders believe in the divisive primary hypothesis, and they have substantial influence over party primaries, then we should expect that states with strong parties will have fewer candidates. The alternative party networking model would lead us to expect that institutionally strong parties would generate more candidates, since there would be greater contacts and resources available for candidates to make use of. Finally, if the service or candidate-centered models are accurate depictions of party strength, then we should expect that party organizational strength will have little to no influence on the number of candidates in House primaries.

## Results

Results of the analysis are presented in Table 5.5. The initial model presents a mixed picture. As expected, for both parties there was a statistically significant relationship between seat status and the number of candidates, with more candidates in open seats and fewer candidates in in-party challenge primaries. There was also a significant and positive relationship between district party bias and the number of candidates. Contrary to Herrnson and Gimpel's results, population diversity was negatively related to the number of candidates for both parties and failed to reach statistical significance. The difference between my operationalization of district diversity and that used by Herrnson and Gimpel might account for the inconsistent results. Also contrary to Herrnson and Gimpel's results, but consistent with the hypothesis, urbanization was positively associated with the number of candidates among Democrats

(although not statistically significant), while among Republicans urbanization was positively and significantly related to the number of primary candidates. Also like Herrnson and Gimpel's earlier work, opportunity structure was related in the expected, positive direction with the number of candidates, but the variable only achieved statistical significance for Republicans. Finally, all three Region variables (Northeast, West, and South) had a negative relationship with the number of candidates, with all of them statistically significant except for Democrats in the Northeast. This result points to a larger number of candidates in the "out" group, the Midwest. These results are somewhat different from that of Herrnson and Gimpel, as they found that there were more Democratic candidates in the Northeast and more Republicans in the West (although neither relationship was statistically significant). These differences are unsurprising given that Herrnson and Gimpel's study was restricted to a single year, which may have had an idiosyncratic distribution of primary competition. It remains the case in both studies that the Midwest sees considerably more primary candidates than most other regions.

The influence of party strength variables was only partly consistent with the work of Herrnson and Gimpel. Like the Herrnson and Gimpel study, the use of pre-primary endorsements had a statistically significant and powerful effect in reducing the number of primary candidates. On the other hand, the use of caucuses was not significantly related to the number of candidates in either party. Furthermore, the directionality of the coefficients was inverted from the Herrnson and Gimpel study, with caucuses positively related to the number of Democrats and negatively related to the number of Republicans.

The other party strength variables had an inconsistent effect on the number of candidates. Some variables were related in the same way to the number of candidates in both parties, while other variables exerted contrary influences. States with few regulations of party financial activity

tended to have more candidates, as the Money Rules variables was positively and statistically significantly related to the number of primary candidates. Restricted primary rules and voter registration by party also tended to result in more candidates, although the results were only significant for Republicans.

In a number of instances, party strength variables operated differently between the two parties. Several states demonstrated positive relationships between party strength and the number of candidates for Republicans, but a negative relationship for Democrats. States in which Democrats dominated state government tended to have fewer candidates (a statistically significant negative relationship to the dependent variable), while Republican-controlled states had more Republican primary candidates (a statistically significant positive relationship to the dependent variable). Similarly, Democratic state parties with low factionalism had fewer candidates and unified Republican state parties had more candidates. In addition, states with a large pool of Democratic donors had significantly fewer candidates, while party network contributions were positively and significantly associated with the number of candidates.

There were several measures of party strength that operated in the reverse manner, with strength leading to fewer Republicans and more Democrats in congressional primaries. One example is that of caucuses (mentioned above). Another is in-state party contributions. In neither instance are the relationships statistically significant.

From the standpoint of relative weight and substantive significance, the most influential variables in the model as measured by standardized coefficients were seat status (open primaries .22-.26, in-party primaries .21 -.27), district party bias (.18 for Democrats, .15 for Republicans), the South (.27 D, .24 R), and pre-primary endorsements (.26 D, .22R). Interestingly, control of

state government was of far greater importance for Democrats (beta weight of .2) than Republicans (.07), indicating a major structural divergence between the two parties.

The model has substantially weaker explanatory power than the original Herrnson-Gimpel model. The adjusted r-square for Democrats is .19, while the model explains roughly 24% of the variance for Republicans. This is a much weaker performance than the original study, which explained 30% of the variance for Democrats and 48% for Republicans. The difference in explanatory power is not caused by the inclusion of additional years, since narrowing the model to the year 1984 (as done by Herrnson and Gimpel) produces approximately similar r-squares (.18 for Democrats and .24 for Republicans). The weaker model is likely due to the exclusion of several variables that were significant in the original model (national committee and local recruitment and on-year state senate elections) as well as the different operationalization of the ethnic diversity variable.

I next tested the full model against the Herrnson-Gimpel model, which has been expanded beyond the year 1984 to cover all elections between 1980 and 1998. The chief difference between the full and adapted Herrnson-Gimpel model is the exclusion of additional party strength measurements in the latter. As in the full model, the diversity variable has been re-operationalized to focus on ethnic and racial diversity, while on-year state senate seats and national and local recruitment activities have been excluded.

The results of the analysis are consistent with the full model. The direction and significance levels are roughly the same for most of the variables. In-party primaries, the South, and pre-primary endorsements are statistically significantly related in the negative direction to the number of House primary candidates for both parties, while open primaries and party bias are statistically significant in the positive direction for both parties. The exclusion of the additional

party strength variables does alter the direction and significance levels of several variables, however. While not significant, ethnic diversity and opportunity structure change from a positive to a negative direction for Democrats, while the Northeast dummy changes to a positive direction. The dummy variable for primaries in the West loses significance and changes to a positive direction for Republicans, while the Northeast dummy loses significance. The removal of several party strength measurements has effects on the measures of party organizational strength that remain in the model, however. For Democrats, states that have presidential caucuses are statistically significantly and negatively related to the number of House candidates. In the full model, the CAUCUS variable is positively related to the number of primary candidates, but does not reach the .05 level of statistical significance. The absence of other important measures of party strength likely biases the results of the Herrnson-Gimpel model. Finally, the explanatory power of the Herrnson-Gimpel model is slightly weaker than that of the full model, explaining 17.9% of the variance for Democrats and 23.1% of the variance for Republicans. On balance, the inclusion of additional measures of party strength appears to improve the predictive power and statistical reliability of the original Herrnson-Gimpel model, recognizing the possible under-specification due to the removal of the variables measuring on-year state senate races and party recruitment of candidates, as well as the different modeling of diversity.

Inclusion of the average survey responses to the Party Transformation Survey (1980 and 1998/2003), by reducing the number of states in the sample to 55, substantially alters the results of the analysis. The most serious difficulty is that it introduces substantial multicollinearity between the Region and party strength variables. By incorporating the SURVEY variable, the variable inflation factor of Northeast (8.1 for Democrats, 21.1 for Republicans) and South (7.2

for Democrats, 7.3 for Republicans), reaches unacceptable levels. Such extreme multicollinearity might account for the different results generated by the model. As seen in Table 5, the significance levels and direction of several variables are altered from the first and second models. Most importantly, the SURVEY variable fails to achieve statistical significance for either party. Given the lack of statistical effect of the party organizational strength survey results drawn from the Cotter et al. study and its updates, the biased estimates generated by the smaller sample, and the questions raised about the survey in Chapter Three, the variable is best excluded from the model.

### Discussion

The results of the full model suggest a real difference between the political cultures of the parties, and a modest influence on candidate entry decisions by state party organizational structure. In the full model, five of the eight measures of party strength were statistically significantly related to the number of primary candidates for at least one of the parties, and four of them were significantly related to both. For Democrats, the use of pre-primary endorsements and a loyal party donors leads to fewer candidates, while liberal financial regulations and control of state government leads to more primary candidates. For Republicans, the number of candidates is positively associated with the loyal party donors, restricted primary rules and party registration, and limited regulation of state party finances. Control of state government and pre-primary endorsements are negatively related to the number of candidates, however.

The results suggest that different dimensions of party organizational “strength” affect candidate decision-making in different ways, with further distinctions between the two political

parties. The analysis above also provides partial support for both the machine model of party organizational strength, in which the party leadership actively shapes the nomination process, and the network model of parties, in which party institutions provide social capital for prospective candidates.

The structural feature most clearly favorable to central party control, pre-primary endorsements, is strongly and negatively associated with the number of primary candidates. Endorsement meetings decisively limit the degree of intra-party competition and by their nature are more subject to manipulation by the party leadership. As indicated in previous research (Canon 1990), pre-primary endorsements increase the probability that an experienced candidate will be nominated. The results of this chapter support the idea that endorsement meetings are an important mechanism for reducing internal party conflict and a useful means of the party leadership to exert control. Traditionally the party convention has been under the control of so-called party “bosses,” and the degree to which such conventions shape primary elections points to the continued relevance of party institutional leadership.

Also following Canon’s work, restrictive primary rules are associated with a larger number of candidates (Canon 1990). Where Canon found that inexperienced candidates are advantaged by a smaller universe of primary votes, the revised Herrnson-Gimpel model demonstrates that under a more restrictive primary rule, more candidates enter the race. While only statistically significant for Republicans, the relationship between the number of candidates and primary and registration rules is positive for both parties. This result is not inconsistent with the network model of party organizations, as more candidates are willing to enter a race where there are fewer votes needed to win over.

Loose regulation of party finances results in a larger pool of primary candidates. There are a number of potential explanations for this result (a looser financial regime might force a party to share power with donors, for example), but these hypotheses would be purely speculative and require more rigorous analysis. In two instances, measures of party strength are statistically significantly related to the number of primary candidates, but in different directions: the same measurement of strength has entirely opposite influences on the parties. In the first case, party network contributions, greater resources result in fewer Democratic primary candidates and more Republican primary candidates. This suggests the possibility of a different organizational culture, with a large pool of donors working according to the machine model for Democrats and the networking model for Republicans. In the second case, control of state government, states in which Democrats are dominant see more Democratic candidates, while states in which Republicans are dominant see fewer Republican candidates. On first analysis, this result suggests the opposite, namely that a dominant state party operates according to the network model of party strength for Democrats and the machine model for Republicans.

Table 5. Influences on the Number of Primary Candidates

Variable	Full Model		Herrnson-Gimpel Model		Full Model w/SURVEY	
	D	R	D	R	D	R
(Constant)	0.185	0.33	0.45	0.351	0.179	0.125
CAUCUS	0.001	-0.003	-0.021*	-0.009	-0.041*	0.015
CONTROL	0.398*	-0.140*			0.133	0.104
ENDORSE	-0.086*	-0.068*	-0.091*	-0.064*	-0.043*	-0.073*
FACTION	0	0.001			-0.002*	0.002
PARTYCONT	0	-0.001			0.002*	0.001
MONEYRULES	0.011*	0.009*			0.011*	0.006
NETWORKCONT	0.000*	0.000*			0	0.001*
PRIMREG	0.004	0.005*			0.001	0.015
SURVEY					0.001	-0.001
DIVERSITY	0.02	-0.174	-0.075	-0.127	0.298	-0.371*
IN-PARTY PRIMARY	-0.099*	-0.126*	-0.097*	-0.128*	-0.091*	-0.120*
NORTHEAST	-0.018	-0.037*	0.006	-0.006	-0.091*	-0.093*
OPEN PRIMARY	0.166*	0.188*	0.166*	0.189*	0.163*	0.202*
OPP. STRUCTURE	0	0.001*	0	0.000*	0	0.001*
PARTY BIAS	0.343*	0.284*	0.408*	0.278*	0.371*	0.194*
SOUTH	-0.140*	-0.123*	-0.074*	-0.079*	-0.122*	-0.078*
URBAN	0	0.000*	0	0.000*	0	0.000*
WEST	-0.074*	-0.026*	-0.060*	0.003	-0.069*	-0.098*
adjusted r <sup>2</sup>	0.195	0.238	0.179	0.231	0.193	0.274

\*statistically significant at .05

CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus

CONTROL: Share of control of state government

ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements

FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner

PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates

MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances

NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty

PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration

SURVEY: Relative change in state party organizational strength using the state party chair/executive director survey

DIVERSITY: Ethnic diversity of the congressional district

IN-PARTY PRIMARY: A primary challenge to an incumbent

NORTHEAST: Northeastern region, including Maryland and Delaware

OPEN PRIMARY: An primary with no incumbent running in either party

OPP. STRUCTURE: The ratio of state legislative to congressional districts

PARTY BIAS: The partisan advantage in a district as measured by average presidential performance

SOUTH: Southern region

URBAN: % of district that is classified as urban by the U.S. Census

WEST: Western region

**CHAPTER SIX:**  
**PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AND POSITIVE RECRUITMENT**  
**THE EMERGENCE OF “QUALITY CANDIDATES”**

Background

The decision of whether or not to enter a race for Congress is one of paramount importance not just for the candidates involved, but for congressional elections more generally. Given the perceived competitiveness of candidates with previous elective experience, whether or not such a candidate chooses to run for the House has a major impact on the dynamics of the race. Previous office-holding experience demonstrates the skills needed to win a race, establishes credibility to other political actors, and gives access to the resources need to mount a serious challenge. Candidates with a proven history of electoral success are feared by incumbents and courted by party leaders. In this chapter I seek to disentangle the various influence that shape the decision of these “quality” candidates as to whether or not to announce their candidacy for the U.S. House.

Several factors shape candidate entry decisions, which can be grouped into several categories: short-term context, long-term structure, and candidate factors. From the point of view of the candidate, all of these factors are oriented towards a single consideration: can the candidate win? Elected officeholders have already achieved some level of political success, and are unlikely to risk their position without a reasonable probability that they will be successful. Thus, the likelihood of victory becomes the essential criterion. There are, of course, other

motivations behind seeking public office, such as public policy preferences. However, winning elective office is the essential means by which policy ends can be achieved. Even if a candidate were running a campaign to influence the incumbent to alter her vote on a major issue, a humiliating defeat would hardly accomplish that end – only if the challenge were a potentially competitive one would the incumbent be faced with sufficient incentive to change her position.

Short-term contextual influences consist largely of national political factors, i.e., whether it is a “good year” to run. These influences are critically dependent on whether the candidate is of the same party as the President. If the economy is poor (Jacobson 1990a, Canon 1990), or the President is for some other reason unpopular (Jacobson 1990a), a candidate of the President’s party may decide that the voters will hold all members of the President’s party accountable, and in such a hostile political environment a run for Congress is too risky.

Even favorable national political conditions may not be enough to induce an experienced candidate to run, depending on the long-term structural characteristics of the district. Office-holders in districts that are hostile to their political party (Canon 1990a, Bond et al. 1997, Gaddie and Bullock 2000, Stone and Maisel 2003) may decide the odds are too long to make the expense and risk of a congressional candidacy worthwhile. Re-districting may alter these calculations (Hetherington et al. 2003, Carson et al. 2006), since an influx of new voters may shake old political alignments. There is also evidence that the emergence of an experienced candidate is more likely when there are simply more of them, i.e. a state with a large state legislature relative to the number of congressional districts (Canon 1990a, Jacobson 1990a).

A number of candidate factors also influence the process of candidate decision-making. The first and most important is the presence or absence of an incumbent. From the descriptive data presented in Chapter 4, clearly more candidates with office-holding experience run for open

seats, where there is no incumbent running. Incumbents are extremely difficult to defeat, with over 90% re-elected in every cycle. Experienced candidates are therefore much less likely to challenge them, particularly in a primary, although incumbents with weak performances in the previous election (Bianco 1984, Bond et al. 1985, Krasno and Green 1988 et al. 1988, Squire and Wright 1990, Jacobson 1990a, Canon 1990) might be seen as more vulnerable and hence to face an experienced opponent. However, there is only limited support for the hypothesis that experienced challengers are more likely to challenge incumbents who are too ideologically extreme for their district (Bond et al. 1985, Squire 1989, Adams and Squire 1997, Gulati 2004, Burden 2001). Some evidence (Steen 2006) suggests that experienced candidates are less likely to run if a wealthy self-financer is running as well. Obviously candidates would prefer no primary opposition, but the presence of a well-financed opponent could make for a particularly difficult contest.

Political parties are another potential influence on candidate decision-making. Many party leaders try to recruit the experienced candidates (Cotter et al. 1984, McAtee 2005), since they are assumed to have the best chance of winning. This activity is described as “positive recruitment,” as opposed to the negative recruitment described in the previous chapter. In addition, the existence of strong party organization could give elected officials a greater hope of success in a general election (especially against an incumbent), while a strong party could also act as a deterrent to those tempted to oppose an incumbent’s re-nomination. Parties therefore could exercise both an active role (where party leaders negatively or positively recruit candidates) and a structural role (by creating opportunities for more resources and support).

## Model Specification

To examine the role that party organizations play in the decision-making of experienced candidates, I have constructed a logistic regression model. Because the decision to enter or not is a binary choice, logistic regression is a more appropriate choice for analysis than linear regression. The unit of analysis is each congressional primary between 1980 and 1998. In those iterations of the model that use the presence of self-financing candidates as a control variable (see below), the model is restricted to the period from 1984 to 1998, since the data for self-financed candidates are not available in 1980 or 1982. The dependent variable, Elected Runs, is operationalized as a dummy variable, coded as 0 when there is no experienced candidate in the primary and 1 when there is. This variable uses the Jacobson operationalization of candidate quality and does not differentiate between types of elected office. The data on candidate backgrounds described in Chapters 2 and 3 have only been gathered for contested primaries, excluding those party nominees who have won in uncontested primaries. The exclusion of nominees in uncontested primaries could bias the results, so I have merged the candidate background data from congressional primaries with Gary Jacobson's data set for general elections, thereby capturing the entire universe of candidates.

The sample is divided according to the nature of the primary: open seats without incumbents, out-party primaries which determine the general election challenger to an incumbent, and in-party primaries in which incumbents are seeking re-nomination. Each model will be tested using both the entire universe of candidates as well as partitioned by political party in order to capture any differences between Democratic and Republican candidate emergence structures.

### *Party Strength*

The main independent variables (common to each specification of the model) are the measures of party organizational strength: party unity in gubernatorial elections (FACTION), control of state government (CONTROL), regulation of party financial activity (MONEYRULES), pre-primary endorsements (ENDORSE), the use of a caucus for selecting national convention delegates (CAUCUS), an additive index of primary rules and party registration (PRIMREG), in-state contributions to candidates by party committees (PARTYCONT), and the pool of loyal party donors (NETWORKCONT). If party organizations play a substantial role in candidate recruitment (the party machine model), measures of party organizational strength should be positively related to the presence of an experienced candidate for open and out-party primaries. For intra-party primaries, party strength should be negatively associated with the presence of an experienced candidate, as the party leadership would likely try to discourage such a contest. The model does not address the presence of additional candidates without elective experience, so it is not directly testing the party networking model. The service model or weak party model both lead to the prediction that party strength would not be significantly related to the emergence of experienced candidates.

### *National Political Tides*

To measure national political tides, I have included a variable measuring presidential approval (PRESPOP). National economic change alone does not capture the totality of the political balance of power, and in any event is strongly correlated with presidential approval (.792), so the president's approval rating will be used. Because candidates must file early in the year in order to compete in a primary, I use approval rating according to the Gallup Poll,

averaging results across the first quarter (January through March), a similar approach to that used by Jacobson. The approval measure is coded according to the party of the candidate and the president, so that for a candidate with the same party as the president the approval rating will be multiplied by positive one, and for a candidate of the opposite party will be multiplied by negative one. Candidates should be more likely to run when the national political environment is favorable to their party, so it is expected that there will be a positive relationship between presidential approval (controlled for party) and the likelihood that an experienced candidate will run for the House. For intra-party primaries, the cue provided by Presidential support will likely be of less use, since all members of the party are equally affected by their affiliation with the President. However, during poor economic times, a general sense of anti-incumbency even within the President's party could spark challenges to incumbents. Therefore, for intra-party primaries, I hypothesize that a weak economy will be positively related to primary challenges to incumbents by experienced challengers.

### *Local Political Structure*

There are multiple variables included to measure local political structure. The first is the partisan bias of the district (DISTRICTBIAS), which is measured by the average vote for president relative to the national presidential vote in each congressional district (see Chapter 5 for more details). District partisan bias should be positively related to an experienced candidacy, since a candidate who wins the primary will have a greater chance of winning the general election than in districts less supportive of the candidate's party. This relationship should hold true even in intra-party primaries. In a lop-sided district, the dominant party might feel free to indulge in internecine rivalries. Similarly, if the outgoing incumbent is of the same party, an

experienced candidate may believe that he or she has an ability to win the seat, even if it might not otherwise incline to the party. Thus, the model includes a dummy variable (PARTYHOLDS), coded “1” for those candidates who are of the same party as the retiring incumbent. Opportunity Structure (OPPSTRUCTURE) is the ratio of U.S. House to state legislative seats in a state, representing the pool of experienced candidates. Those states with a high ratio of legislators to congressional seats should have more experienced candidates running for Congress, simply because there are more such candidates available. I have also included a dummy for years in which a congressional district was redrawn (REDISTRICT), since candidates are more likely to run for Congress in such districts.

### *Candidate Effects*

If an incumbent is running for re-election, his or her performance is clearly a major influence on the decision of other office-holders to make a challenge. Incumbents who have had close races in the recent past are more likely to be viewed as politically vulnerable and hence attract serious opponents. These calculations are likely based on the incumbent’s electoral success for the race in which he or she is to be challenged. For out-party races the previous *general election* percentage received by the incumbent (OLDVOTE) should be negatively related to a quality challenge, while for in-party primaries an incumbent’s previous *primary* performance (PREVPRIM) should be negatively related to a challenge by an experienced candidate. The dummy variable indicating whether an incumbent is a freshman (FRESHMAN) is expected to be positively related to a serious challenge, since freshmen may not have firmly established themselves in the district or may be perceived to have won their seat in somewhat of a fluke.

Incumbents raise large sums of money in order to deter potential opponents, so for both in-party and out-party primaries incumbent cash-on-hand as reported by the Federal Election Commission (WARCHEST) is expected to be negatively related to a quality challenge. Conversely, incumbents who are suffering from scandal (whether criminal charges or simply a great deal of bad press) are more likely to attract quality challengers, whether in the general election or the primary. Unfortunately the “scandal” variable is not available for general elections, so the INCSCANDAL variable is only used for primary challenges to incumbents.

Though not supported by previous studies, incumbents who are ideologically extreme for their districts may be likely to face more quality opponents in general elections, while incumbents who are too moderate may face challenges in the primary. To test the relationship between ideology and candidate emergence, the out-party and in-party models include a variable measuring the difference between the ideology of an incumbent’s vote record in Congress and the ideology of the district. Rather than using presidential voting (which might result in contamination with the DISTRICTBIAS variable), I employ Ardoin and Garand’s (2003) measure of constituent ideology (which begins in 1982). The standardized measure of district ideology is then subtracted from the standardized NOMINATE score (Poole & Rosenthal 2001) measuring the ideology of an incumbent’s voting record in Congress. This measure of ideological discrepancy (IDEO), indicating the difference between the district and the member of Congress, is controlled for party affiliation, so that a positive rating indicates a more liberal Democrat or a more conservative Republican. In general elections, where under the Median Voter Theorem (Down 1957) moderation should be rewarded, ideological extremism is predicted to be positively associated with the emergence of a quality challenger, while in primaries

ideological extremism will be negatively related with the entry of a candidate with elective experience.

In races without incumbents, other factors might play a role in candidate decision-making. For example, a potential candidate might be less likely to enter a race in which a self-financer has already announced. Therefore, for out-party and open primaries, the model includes a dummy variable (SELFFINANCER) that I hypothesize to be negatively associated with the dependent variable. Because the data for self-financing only begins in 1984, the years previous to that date are excluded. In addition, candidates may be less willing to enter a crowded primary (Maisel and Stone 2001), so I have created another dummy variable (CONTESTED), coded “1” for whenever there are 2 or more candidates running in the primary, which I expect to be negatively related to the presence of an office-holding candidate.

## Results

### *Open Primaries*

The first model (see Table 6.1) examines the likelihood that a candidate with previous experience in elective office will enter a congressional primary without an incumbent. The model includes members of both political parties in all U.S. House primaries between 1984 and 1998. The model’s fit is sufficient to reject the null hypothesis (.159 Hosmer-Lemeshow significance), and explains roughly 31% of the variance using the Nagelkerke R-square, somewhat better than similar models used by Canon (.25) and Bond et al. (.29 for Democrats, .14 for Republicans).

In general, the measures of party organizational strength operated as hypothesized in a single instance: state party contributions to general election candidates. The other measures were

either statistically insignificant, negatively related to candidate entry, or both. Party financial structure appears to have a powerful effect on candidate entry, albeit in contrary ways. The single most influential variable in the model was per capita contributions by the state party to general election candidates (PARTYCONT), which was statistically significant and had an odds ratio of 54.5. Alternatively, states with a large pool of loyal party donors, represented by the NETWORKCONT variable, are less likely to have experienced candidates running in open seat primaries (statistically significant at the .05 level), with an odds ratio of .84. The other party strength variables performed relatively weakly. Control of state government, party unity, restricted primary rules and party registration, presidential nominating caucuses, and in-state contributions by party committees are all positively associated with an increase in the probability that an experienced candidate will run for an open House seat, with only the latter two variables reaching statistical significance. In contrast, states with liberalized financial regulations and pre-primary endorsements were negatively but statistically insignificantly related to the entry of candidates who have held elective office.

Only some of the control variables are related to whether an experienced challenger entered the primary in the expected direction, and not all reach the .05 level of statistical significance. There was a statistically significant increase in the probability that a candidate with elected experience entered the race when the district was favorable to the party (odds ratio of 28.3) and the incumbent was of the same party (odds ratio = 2.9). While experienced candidates were less likely to run in primaries against self-financed candidates, the relationship was not statistically significant. Counter to expectations, the national political environment (measured by presidential approval) had little effect on the probability that an experienced candidate would run for the House – and that relationship was negative. This result contradicts Jacobson's Strategic

Politicians Hypothesis, since under this theory a favorable national political environment should substantially increase the likelihood that quality candidates will run. Similarly, state opportunity structure was negatively (but not statistically significantly) related to the emergence of a quality candidate. Experienced candidates were also more likely to run in contested primaries (odds ratio = 5.5), with the relationship significant at the .05 level. This finding is the reverse of that expected. The “contested primary” variable may be capturing those effects not represented by the other variables in the model, as a crowded primary is likely to be one in which the party expects a good chance at victory. I will explore this issue further below.

The negative relationship between a strong party financial network and the emergence of experienced candidates is puzzling, but disappears once the model is partitioned to control for party differences.

The other variables operate somewhat differently once the distinctions between the parties are accounted for (see Tables 6.2 and 6.3). For Democrats, the statistical power of the partisanship of the district and the use of caucuses lose significance, but opportunity structure achieves it. The importance of a financially active state party is magnified when party is controlled for, with the odds ratio of in-state party contributions rising to 71.4. Several of the other party strength variables change directions, with financial regulations and endorsements now increasing the probability of a quality candidate, but the relationship remains statistically insignificant.

For Republicans, neither presidential approval, opportunity structure, or state regulation of party finances achieve statistical significance. The partisanship of the district and the activity of state party committees have a much more powerful effect for Republicans than Democrats, achieving statistical significance in a positive direction and with odds ratios of 1410.6 and 500.1,

respectively. The use of party caucuses achieves statistical significance in a positive direction. The model explains the behavior of Republican candidates somewhat better than Democrats, with an r-square of .395 to .292.

Thus, while in both parties financially strong party committees, contested primaries, and current control of the seat encourage experienced candidates to contend in open seat primaries, the structure of political opportunity plays a greater role for Democrats, while district partisanship and presidential nominating procedure have a greater influence for Republicans. The generally modest predictive power of the model does not support the hypothesis that party organizations play a major role in recruiting candidates for open seats – a not surprising result, since an open seat is so attractive to candidates that there is little need for a party to recruit anyone – strong candidates will likely run anyway. However, parties that have demonstrated the capacity to raise large sums for its candidates in the general election and much more likely to be able to attract experienced candidates to the race.

### *Out-Party Primaries*

The difficulty of unseating an incumbent could make recruitment by party leaders more important in out-party races than in open seats. Elected officials of the out-party are forced to consider both their chances in the primaries as well as the vulnerability of the incumbent. Even if the nomination is secured, the potential candidate is likely to be defeated, meaning that considerable persuasion would have to be applied to convince a candidate that the risk to his or her reputation and career prospects is less important than giving a strong challenge to an incumbent of the opposite party.

According to the original hypotheses described previously, the relationship between the independent and dependent variables are expected to positive, with the exception of contested primaries, self-financed primary opponents, previous general election performance by the incumbent, and the size of the incumbent's war chest. The results of the full model (combining primaries for both parties) are presented in Table 64.

According to the results of the logistic regression analysis (presented in Table 6.4), party organizational structure plays a greater role in out-party than open seat primaries. Of the eight variables measuring party strength, five had a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of a quality candidate, and in four of these the relationship with candidate entry was positive. The analysis suggests that, whereas an open seat is desirable enough that it is unnecessary for the party to actively recruit candidates, party recruitment is more important in fielding challenges to incumbents. Consistent with expectations, state parties with pre-primary endorsements, control of state government, restrictive primary rules, and high per-capita spending all had a statistically significant greater chance of fielding candidates with experience in elective office. Conversely, states with liberalized financial rules (significant at .05) and unified parties (not significant) were less likely to have experienced candidates running against incumbents. However, in-state party contributions, while significant, were not as determinative as for open seat races, with an odds ratio of 4. The CAUCUS and NETWORKCONT variables were also positively related to quality candidate entry, but the relationship was not statistically significant.

Most of the control variables behaved in the expected manner, and eleven of the eighteen variables achieved statistical significance at the .05 level. The model explained 24% of the variance in the dependent variable. Primaries in districts that were favorable to the party or had recently been re-districted had a statistically significantly greater probability of having a

candidate with elective experience run for the House, with district partisan bias having the most influence on the dependent variable (odds ratio = 235.8). Incumbents with ideologically extreme voting records, weak victories in the previous election, and who were freshmen were also more likely to attract experienced challengers of the opposite party. The presence of self-financed candidates, presidential approval, and large incumbent war chests had no statistically significant effect on candidate entry by experienced candidates. As in the open seat model, contested primaries actually made it more likely that an officeholder would run for Congress.

Dividing the sample to control for political party indicates further structural differences between Democrats (Table 6.5) and Republicans (Table 6.6). The predictive power of the model is roughly the same for both (.240 r-square for Democrats, .237 for Republicans), and the direction and significance level of most of the variables are unchanged. As with the combined sample, district partisanship plays the greatest role, with odds ratios of 1515.2 for Democrats and 443.6 for Republicans. For both parties, re-districting, contested primaries, freshman status, and an extreme voting record are all statistically significantly more likely to result in a quality challenger, while opportunity structure and an incumbent's previous vote share reduces the likelihood. The effect of party organizational strength is quite different between the two parties however. For Democrats, none of the party strength variables achieve statistical significance (in-state party committee contributions comes close with a p-value of .051), and the CAUCUS and FACTION coefficients change signs.

The model for Republicans exhibits counterintuitive results. As with Democrats, in-state party contributions and regulation of party finances cease to have a significant effect on the probability an experienced candidate will run. However, party control of state government, pre-primary endorsements, and restrictive primary rules continue to have a significant and positive

effect on the dependent variable. The effect of incumbent war chests on the dependent variable was not significant. Curiously, party unity and presidential approval assert a *negative* and *statistically significant* influence on the likelihood that an officeholder will run for the party's nomination. In other words, a quality candidate is less likely to run in years in which his party appears favored to win, and more likely to run when the state party is factionalized. As for party factionalism, experienced candidates may be somehow disadvantaged or at odds with the party leadership in states where the party controls state government. Finally, the relationships may be statistical anomalies, although diagnostics failed to reveal any particular problems. These are only possibilities, however, and the results remain unclear. Note also that the effects are quite weak, with presidential approval exerting a .3% change in probability and factionalism a 3.4% change in probability.

### *Intra-Party Primaries*

While incumbents are usually re-nominated, they are often challenged in the primary by members of their own party. They are only rarely defeated, and as the descriptive data indicates, few experienced officeholders are willing to embark on what can seem to be a fool's errand in running against an incumbent in the primary. However, a total of 227 candidates did so between 1980 and 1998, enough to make it worthwhile to examine the factors that might lure an experienced candidate into entering the race. Unlike open seat and out-party primaries, party organizational strength should be negatively correlated with the emergence of an experienced candidate, because the party organization would in almost all cases prefer that the incumbent be re-nominated without a battle for re-nomination. In the context of intra-party primaries, experienced candidates are thereby cast in the role of insurgents, rather than the party favorites

they presumably are in other circumstances. Similarly, a strong national economy, an incumbent's previous electoral performance (in this instance primary performance), and incumbent war chest are all expected to be negatively related to the probability that a candidate with office-holding experience will run for Congress. Unlike out-party primaries, I predict that incumbents with ideologically extreme records will be *less* likely to face intra-party competition. I also hypothesize that other measures of incumbent vulnerability (opportunity structure, redistricting, scandal, and freshman status) will be positively related to a primary challenge to an incumbent by an experienced candidate.

The results of the model for both parties are presented in Table 6.7. The model predicts approximately 23% of the variance in the dependent variable, using the Nagelkerke r-square measure. Party organizational strength appears to play little role in deterring candidates from running against incumbents in the primary. Only one party strength variable, control of state government, is statistically significant, and this measure is positively related to an intra-party challenge. States with unified parties, pre-primary endorsements, caucuses, financially active party committees, and large donor networks are less likely to experience intra-party primaries between incumbents and officeholders, and more likely to have them with restrictive primary rules and unregulated party finances, but these relationships are statistically insignificant.

With two exceptions, the coefficients of the control variables are in the hypothesized direction. The most influential variables across all versions of the model are the partisan bias of the district and whether the incumbent is suffering from scandal, which are statistically significant and positively related to an officeholder's candidacy. A strong national economy and large winning margin in the previous primary by the incumbent are statistically significantly related to a decline in the probability that an experienced primary challenger will emerge.

Conversely, such candidates are more likely to run after re-districting, which is statistically significant at the .05 level. As with the other models, the ratio of state legislative seats to congressional districts is statistically significant and negatively related to the emergence of a quality candidate. Also contradicting the initial expectation, incumbents with large war chests are significantly more likely to face serious candidates in the primary. While the freshman status and ideological moderation variables operate in the expected direction, the relationship with candidate entry is not statistically significant.

The results of the model are somewhat different when the sample is controlled for political party. The explanatory power of the model is slightly greater for Republicans (Table 6.9), with an r-square of .265 compared to .243 for Democrats Table 6.8). The results suggest differences between the parties with respect to the influence of party organizations. While control of state government is positively associated with the emergence of quality candidates for Democrats and Republicans, it only reaches statistical significance for the latter. Networks of loyal party donors result in a greater (although statistically insignificant) chance of an experienced Democratic elected official running against an incumbent in the primary, while for Republicans party financial networks result in a statistically significant *lower* probability that an officeholder will run for the House. Party unity, pre-primary, caucuses, regulation of state party finances, state party donations to general election candidates, restrictive primary rules and endorsements are not significantly associated with the candidacy of an elected official for both parties.

For Democrats and Republicans, the national economy, opportunity structure, and previous primary performance remain negatively associated with the emergence of experienced candidates. District partisanship, redistricting, scandal, freshman status, and war chests remains

positively related to the dependent variable. Freshman status and opportunity structure have a statistically significant effect for Democrats, but not Republican, while redistricting is significant for Republicans but not for Democrats. As opposed to the general model, the state of the national economy has no significant influence on the probability of an officeholder's candidacy for either party.

### Discussion

The statistical analysis presented in this chapter suggests that neither party organizations nor national political tides greatly influence the decisions of experienced candidates to run for Congress. In only one iteration of the model do national issues (whether measured by the nationally economy or presidential approval) significantly shape candidate decision-making, and then in the opposite direction to that hypothesized. As a result, these results cast some doubt on Jacobson's theory that the electoral effects of national economic conditions are mediated by candidate emergence.

Party organizational structure also has a limited effect on the decision of candidates to enter races. Where party does play a role, it is more often in the Republican Party and for primaries in the out-party. Control of state government has a positive effect in all versions of the model, reaching statistical significance for Republicans in out-party and in-party races. Control of state government seems to encourage Republicans to run for the House, even against incumbents and when district partisanship and other factors are controlled for. Party factionalism, regulation of party finances, and the use of caucuses has mixed effects, with the former two reducing the likelihood of a quality candidate entering the race in out-party races and

the latter increasing the chances in open seat races. Restrictive primary rules generally increase the probability that an officeholder will run for Congress. None of those variables points to a consistent pattern in the influence of party organizations. The clearest support for the machine model of party organization is the use of pre-primary endorsements, which reduces the chances of that an experienced candidate will run in in-party challenges to incumbents and increases the odds that an experienced candidate will seek the nomination against an incumbent Democrat. The results suggest that the background of party success and cohesion in the state increases the supply of experienced candidates in primaries, while the structure of the nominating process is more subject to control by the party leadership. Also strengthening the hand of the party leadership in primary contests is the activity of well-financed party committees, which results in positive recruitment of quality candidates in open and out-party races. The presence of a network of party contributors has inconsistent effects on candidate emergence, reducing the chances of a quality candidate's emergence in open seat and in-party races, and increasing it in out-party contests. While there are differences in how party strength influences the two parties, in the Republican Party measures of party structure more often have a significant influence than Democrats. The effects remain quite weak however, particularly in open seat races.

Candidate decision-making is strongly influenced by local political context and the status of other candidates in the race. These influences are relatively consistent across parties and types of races. Candidate who have held elective office are more likely to run when the district favors their party, after re-districting, and for open seats when the party holds the seat. Quality candidates are also attracted to primaries in which there are a number of other candidates or the incumbent demonstrates political weakness, either through low vote margins, a lack of seniority, an ideology out of step with the district, or scandal. The presence of self-financed opponents

does have some deterrent effect on experienced candidates, but this relationship never reaches the level of statistical significance. Ideology also plays only a weak role in primary challenges to incumbents, implying that incumbents can safely moderate their voting records to focus on the general election, essentially taking their base for granted. Incumbent war chests appear have a slight deterrent effect, but only for candidates of the other party. Finally, the ratio of state legislative to congressional seats in a state generally has a significant and negative effect on the likelihood that an experienced candidate will emerge in the primary. While this relationship was not expected, or consistent with previous research, the explanation is fairly straightforward. The larger the number of state legislators there are in a state, the smaller the districts will be, while the population of U.S. House districts is fixed. State legislators representing smaller constituencies will by definition have a much narrower political base and thus create a much bigger political gap between members of congress and state legislators. As such, state legislators from small districts may find it less likely that they will be on a competitive footing in congressional contests. Alternatively, legislators from states with demographically large seats will be accustomed to raising the resources necessary to compete on the level of congressmen, and will have far higher name recognition.

Overall, the results of this chapter highlight the local character of congressional contests. Potential candidates surveying the political environment appear to be independent actors weighing the probability of victory with little regard to the role of party leaders or the national political environment. This calculation may be inaccurate, however, if party organizational structure affects the contest once the campaign begins. I will examine this possibility in the next chapter.

Table 6.1 – Quality Candidate Entry - All Open Primaries

-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
813.542	0.227	0.306

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
CONTROL	1.113	0.657	2.867	0.090	3.043
FACTION	0.012	0.009	1.535	0.215	1.012
MONEYRULES	-0.004	0.055	0.006	0.940	0.996
ENDORSE	-0.085	0.158	0.290	0.590	0.918
CAUCUS	0.588	0.283	4.320	0.038	1.800
PRIMREG	0.101	0.053	3.656	0.056	1.106
NETWORKCONT	-0.170	0.083	4.189	0.041*	0.844
PARTYCONT	4.000	1.360	8.644	0.003*	54.593
PRESPOP	0.000	0.002	0.003	0.958	1.000
DISTRICTBIAS	3.342	0.872	14.677	0.000*	28.287
OPP. STRUCTURE	-0.592	0.314	3.549	0.060	0.553
REDISTRICT	0.147	0.201	0.535	0.464	1.159
PARTYHOLDS	1.056	0.193	30.027	0.000*	2.875
CONTESTED	1.696	0.208	66.403	0.000*	5.451
SELFFINANCER	-0.201	0.226	0.795	0.373	0.818
Constant	-2.282	0.857	7.089	0.008	0.102

\*statistically significant at .05

CONTROL: Share of control of state government

FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner

MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances

ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements

CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus

PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration

NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty

PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates

PRESPOP: Presidential approval rating in the first quarter

DISTRICTBIAS: The partisan advantage in a district as measured by average presidential performance

OPP. STRUCTURE: The ratio of state legislative to congressional districts

REDISTRICT: Seat has been re-districted

PARTYHOLDS: Currently held by the candidate's political party

CONTESTED: Number of candidates in the primary

SELFFINANCER: Presence of a self-financed candidate in the primary

Table 6.2 – Quality Candidate Entry - Democratic Open Primaries

-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
402.393	0.214	0.292

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
CONTROL	0.322	1.438	0.050	0.823	1.380
FACTION	0.011	0.013	0.688	0.407	1.011
MONEYRULES	0.018	0.081	0.049	0.825	1.018
ENDORSE	0.088	0.227	0.150	0.699	1.092
CAUCUS	0.200	0.461	0.189	0.664	1.222
PRIMREG	0.087	0.081	1.180	0.277	1.091
NETWORKCONT	-0.182	0.116	2.470	0.116	0.834
PARTYCONT	4.269	2.001	4.551	0.033*	71.416
PRESPOP	-0.003	0.002	1.249	0.264	0.997
DISTRICTBIAS	1.480	1.236	1.433	0.231	4.391
OPPSTRUCTURE	-1.521	0.477	10.147	0.001*	0.219
REDISTRICT	0.061	0.298	0.042	0.838	1.063
PARTYHOLDS	1.218	0.286	18.197	0.000*	3.382
CONTESTED	1.911	0.301	40.236	0.000*	6.760
SELFFINANCER	-0.342	0.335	1.044	0.307	0.710
Constant	-1.781	1.501	1.408	0.235	0.168

\*statistically significant at .05

CONTROL: Share of control of state government

FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner

MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances

ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements

CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus

PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration

NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty

PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates

PRESPOP: Presidential approval rating in the first quarter

DISTRICTBIAS: The partisan advantage in a district as measured by average presidential performance

OPP. STRUCTURE: The ratio of state legislative to congressional districts

REDISTRICT: Seat has been re-districted

PARTYHOLDS: Currently held by the candidate's political party

CONTESTED: Number of candidates in the primary

SELFFINANCER: Presence of a self-financed candidate in the primary

Table 6.3 – Quality Candidate Entry - Republican Open Primaries

-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
379.766	0.295	0.395

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
CONTROL	0.394	1.185	0.111	0.739	1.483
FACTION	-0.017	0.020	0.708	0.400	0.984
MONEYRULES	0.019	0.096	0.040	0.841	1.020
ENDORSE	-0.039	0.252	0.024	0.876	0.961
CAUCUS	0.880	0.436	4.079	0.043*	2.411
PRIMREG	0.087	0.077	1.284	0.257	1.091
NETWORKCONT	-0.034	0.187	0.033	0.855	0.967
PARTYCONT	6.215	2.172	8.184	0.004*	500.108
PRESPOP	0.003	0.002	1.026	0.311	1.003
DISTRICTBIAS	<b>7.252</b>	1.495	23.534	0.000*	1410.593
OPPSTRUCTURE	0.865	0.556	2.419	0.120	2.376
REDISTRICT	0.133	0.313	0.182	0.670	1.143
PARTYHOLDS	0.766	0.283	7.340	0.007*	2.151
CONTESTED	1.758	0.318	30.597	0.000*	5.803
SELFFINANCER	-0.270	0.329	0.674	0.412	0.764
Constant	-1.327	1.527	0.755	0.385	0.265

\*statistically significant at .05

CONTROL: Share of control of state government

FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner

MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances

ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements

CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus

PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration

NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty

PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates

PRESPOP: Presidential approval rating in the first quarter

DISTRICTBIAS: The partisan advantage in a district as measured by average presidential performance

OPP. STRUCTURE: The ratio of state legislative to congressional districts

REDISTRICT: Seat has been re-districted

PARTYHOLDS: Currently held by the candidate's political party

CONTESTED: Number of candidates in the primary

SELFFINANCER: Presence of a self-financed candidate in the primary

Table 6.4 – Quality Candidate Entry - All Out-party Primaries

-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
2329.492	0.145	0.240

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
CONTROL	1.958	0.442	19.639	0.000*	7.083
FACTION	-0.003	0.006	0.204	0.651	0.997
MONEYRULES	-0.081	0.031	6.711	0.010*	0.923
ENDORSE	0.280	0.095	8.708	0.003*	1.323
CAUCUS	0.009	0.159	0.003	0.957	1.009
PRIMREG	0.091	0.031	8.832	0.003*	1.095
NETWORKCONT	0.003	0.052	0.004	0.951	1.003
PARTYCONT	1.376	0.635	4.692	0.030*	3.959
PRESPOP	-0.002	0.001	2.361	0.124	0.998
DISTRICTBIAS	5.463	0.684	63.766	0.000*	235.754
OPPSTRUCTURE	-1.395	0.217	41.381	0.000*	0.248
REDISTRICT	0.751	0.135	30.846	0.000*	2.119
CONTESTED	0.769	0.117	42.862	0.000*	2.158
SELFFINANCER	-0.071	0.188	0.142	0.707	0.932
OLDVOTE	-0.027	0.005	28.580	0.000*	0.974
FRESHMAN	0.743	0.132	31.763	0.000*	2.101
IDEO	0.216	0.060	12.808	0.000*	1.241
WARCHEST	0.000	0.000	0.256	0.613	1.000
Constant	-0.733	0.600	1.493	0.222	0.481

\*statistically significant at .05

CONTROL: Share of control of state government

FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner

MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances

ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements

CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus

PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration

NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty

PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates

PRESPOP: Presidential approval rating in the first quarter

DISTRICTBIAS: The partisan advantage in a district as measured by average presidential performance

OPP. STRUCTURE: The ratio of state legislative to congressional districts

REDISTRICT: Seat has been re-districted

CONTESTED: Number of candidates in the primary

SELFFINANCER: Presence of a self-financed candidate in the primary

OLDVOTE: Previous general election vote of incumbent

FRESHMAN: Incumbent was elected in the previous election

IDEO: Ideological extremism of the incumbent

WARCHEST: Cash-on-hand of the incumbent

Table 6.5 – Quality Candidate Entry - Democratic Out-party Primaries

-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1065.773	0.141	0.227

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
CONTROL	0.194	0.837	0.054	0.816	1.215
FACTION	0.009	0.008	1.376	0.241	1.009
MONEYRULES	-0.038	0.046	0.674	0.412	0.963
ENDORSE	0.203	0.142	2.026	0.155	1.225
CAUCUS	-0.415	0.254	2.670	0.102	0.660
PRIMREG	0.042	0.047	0.784	0.376	1.043
NETWORKCONT	0.038	0.078	0.242	0.623	1.039
PARTYCONT	1.775	0.911	3.799	0.051	5.902
PRESPOP	0.000	0.002	0.041	0.839	1.000
DISTRICTBIAS	7.323	1.248	34.450	0.000*	1515.205
OPPSTRUCTURE	-1.969	0.340	33.460	0.000*	0.140
REDISTRICT	0.733	0.218	11.292	0.001*	2.082
CONTESTED	0.657	0.173	14.364	0.000*	1.929
SELFFINANCER	-0.059	0.296	0.039	0.842	0.943
OLDVOTE	-0.027	0.008	12.127	0.000*	0.973
FRESHMAN	0.417	0.196	4.548	0.033*	1.518
IDEO	0.247	0.105	5.516	0.019*	1.280
WARCHEST	0.000	0.000	0.698	0.403	1.000
Constant	-0.043	0.974	0.002	0.965	0.958

\*statistically significant at .05

CONTROL: Share of control of state government

FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner

MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances

ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements

CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus

PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration

NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty

PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates

PRESPOP: Presidential approval rating in the first quarter

DISTRICTBIAS: The partisan advantage in a district as measured by average presidential performance

OPP. STRUCTURE: The ratio of state legislative to congressional districts

REDISTRICT: Seat has been re-districted

CONTESTED: Number of candidates in the primary

SELFFINANCER: Presence of a self-financed candidate in the primary

OLDVOTE: Previous general election vote of incumbent

FRESHMAN: Incumbent was elected in the previous election

IDEO: Ideological extremism of the incumbent

WARCHEST: Cash-on-hand of the incumbent

Table 6.6 – Quality Candidate Entry - Republican Out-party Primaries

Chi-square	df	Sig.
10.677	8.000	0.221

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
CONTROL	2.647	0.714	13.728	0.000*	14.108
FACTION	-0.036	0.011	10.067	0.002*	0.965
MONEYRULES	-0.067	0.052	1.662	0.197	0.935
ENDORSE	0.418	0.145	8.292	0.004*	1.519
CAUCUS	0.131	0.240	0.298	0.585	1.140
PRIMREG	0.094	0.044	4.679	0.031*	1.099
NETWORKCONT	0.102	0.108	0.901	0.343	1.108
PARTYCONT	1.426	1.002	2.024	0.155	4.162
PRESPOP	-0.003	0.001	5.427	0.020*	0.997
DISTRICTBIAS	6.095	0.926	43.276	0.000*	443.577
OPPSTRUCTURE	-0.674	0.343	3.859	0.049*	0.510
REDISTRICT	0.851	0.184	21.306	0.000*	2.341
CONTESTED	0.849	0.165	26.496	0.000*	2.337
SELFFINANCER	-0.138	0.253	0.299	0.584	0.871
OLDVOTE	-0.019	0.007	8.424	0.004*	0.981
FRESHMAN	1.053	0.188	31.410	0.000*	2.866
IDEO	0.258	0.109	5.657	0.017*	1.295
WARCHEST	0.000	0.000	0.007	0.934	1.000
Constant	-0.035	0.996	0.001	0.972	0.966

\*statistically significant at .05

CONTROL: Share of control of state government

FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner

MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances

ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements

CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus

PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration

NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty

PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates

PRESPOP: Presidential approval rating in the first quarter

DISTRICTBIAS: The partisan advantage in a district as measured by average presidential performance

OPP. STRUCTURE: The ratio of state legislative to congressional districts

REDISTRICT: Seat has been re-districted

CONTESTED: Number of candidates in the primary

SELFFINANCER: Presence of a self-financed candidate in the primary

OLDVOTE: Previous general election vote of incumbent

FRESHMAN: Incumbent was elected in the previous election

IDEO: Ideological extremism of the incumbent

WARCHEST: Cash-on-hand of the incumbent

Table 6.7 – Quality Candidate Entry - All In-party Primaries

-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
907.085	0.065	0.227

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
CONTROL	1.967	0.841	5.472	0.019*	7.150
FACTION	-0.009	0.010	0.748	0.387	0.991
MONEYRULES	0.020	0.058	0.120	0.729	1.020
ENDORSE	-0.086	0.194	0.196	0.658	0.918
CAUCUS	-0.110	0.315	0.122	0.727	0.896
PRIMREG	0.049	0.056	0.765	0.382	1.050
NETWORKCONT	-0.016	0.087	0.033	0.856	0.984
PARTYCONT	-1.421	1.481	0.921	0.337	0.241
NATLECON	-0.115	0.054	4.498	0.034*	0.892
DISTRICTBIAS	2.956	0.800	13.647	0.000*	19.216
OPPSTRUCTURE	-1.076	0.418	6.612	0.010*	0.341
REDISTRICT	0.462	0.205	5.090	0.024*	1.587
IDEO	-0.038	0.112	0.114	0.736	0.963
INCSCANDAL	2.158	0.353	37.301	0.000*	8.652
PREVPRIM	-0.017	0.002	73.379	0.000*	0.983
FRESHMAN	0.303	0.248	1.493	0.222	1.353
WARCHEST	0.000	0.000	19.955	0.000*	1.000
Constant	-2.096	0.999	4.405	0.036	0.123

\*statistically significant at .05

CONTROL: Share of control of state government

FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner

MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances

ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements

CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus

PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration

NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty

PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates

NATLECON: Change in real disposable income

DISTRICTBIAS: The partisan advantage in a district as measured by average presidential performance

OPPSTRUCTURE: The ratio of state legislative to congressional districts

REDISTRICT: Seat has been re-districted

IDEO: Ideological moderation of the incumbent

INCSCANDAL: Incumbent is suffering from scandal

PREVPRIM: Previous primary vote of incumbent

FRESHMAN: Incumbent was elected in the previous election

WARCHEST: Cash-on-hand of the incumbent

Table 6.8 – Quality Candidate Entry - Democratic In-party Primaries

-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
597.106	0.080	0.243

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
CONTROL	0.048	1.376	0.001	0.972	1.049
FACTION	-0.007	0.012	0.319	0.572	0.993
MONEYRULES	0.061	0.075	0.663	0.415	1.063
ENDORSE	-0.131	0.241	0.297	0.586	0.877
CAUCUS	-0.573	0.426	1.809	0.179	0.564
PRIMREG	-0.004	0.071	0.003	0.954	0.996
NETWORKCONT	0.158	0.107	2.170	0.141	1.171
PARTYCONT	0.305	1.698	0.032	0.858	1.356
NATLECON	-0.116	0.063	3.395	0.065	0.890
DISTRICTBIAS	3.683	0.937	15.435	0.000*	39.771
OPPSTRUCTURE	-1.532	0.531	8.318	0.004*	0.216
REDISTRICT	0.253	0.253	1.002	0.317	1.288
IDEO	0.125	0.158	0.626	0.429	1.133
INCSCANDAL	2.306	0.426	29.327	0.000*	10.035
PREVPRIM	-0.016	0.002	44.738	0.000*	0.984
FRESHMAN	0.848	0.293	8.361	0.004*	2.336
WARCHEST	0.000	0.000	20.692	0.000*	1.000
Constant	-1.939	1.450	1.790	0.181	0.144

\*statistically significant at .05

CONTROL: Share of control of state government

FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner

MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances

ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements

CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus

PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration

NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty

PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates

NATLECON: Change in real disposable income

DISTRICTBIAS: The partisan advantage in a district as measured by average presidential performance

OPPSTRUCTURE: The ratio of state legislative to congressional districts

REDISTRICT: Seat has been re-districted

IDEO: Ideological moderation of the incumbent

INCSCANDAL: Incumbent is suffering from scandal

PREVPRIM: Previous primary vote of incumbent

FRESHMAN: Incumbent was elected in the previous election

WARCHEST: Cash-on-hand of the incumbent

Table 6.9 – Quality Candidate Entry - Republican In-party Primaries

-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
277.804	0.059	0.265

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
CONTROL	3.982	1.850	4.630	0.031*	53.599
FACTION	-0.018	0.029	0.376	0.540	0.983
MONEYRULES	-0.009	0.117	0.006	0.937	0.991
ENDORSE	-0.366	0.482	0.576	0.448	0.694
CAUCUS	0.291	0.618	0.222	0.638	1.338
PRIMREG	0.063	0.120	0.277	0.598	1.065
WARCHEST	0.000	0.000	3.837	0.050*	1.000
NETWORKCONT	-0.607	0.246	6.071	0.014*	0.545
NATLECON	-0.087	0.107	0.660	0.416	0.916
DISTRICTBIAS	2.794	2.899	0.929	0.335	16.345
OPPSTRUCTURE	-0.723	0.878	0.677	0.411	0.485
REDISTRICT	0.864	0.379	5.187	0.023*	2.373
IDEO	-0.133	0.229	0.340	0.560	0.875
INCSCANDAL	2.479	0.714	12.043	0.001*	11.932
PREVPRIM	-0.024	0.004	37.117	0.000*	0.976
FRESHMAN	-0.806	0.539	2.238	0.135	0.447
PARTYCONT	-3.224	3.465	0.866	0.352	0.040
Constant	0.629	2.413	0.068	0.794	1.876

\*statistically significant at .05

CONTROL: Share of control of state government

FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner

MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances

ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements

CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus

PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration

NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty

PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates

NATLECON: Change in real disposable income

DISTRICTBIAS: The partisan advantage in a district as measured by average presidential performance

OPPSTRUCTURE: The ratio of state legislative to congressional districts

REDISTRICT: Seat has been re-districted

IDEO: Ideological moderation of the incumbent

INCSCANDAL: Incumbent is suffering from scandal

PREVPRIM: Previous primary vote of incumbent

FRESHMAN: Incumbent was elected in the previous election

WARCHEST: Cash-on-hand of the incumbent

## **CHAPTER SEVEN:**

### **THE CAMPAIGN**

While the previous chapters have dealt with the direct and indirect influence of party organizations on the process of candidate emergence, in this chapter I will explore the relationship between candidate characteristics and political structure during the campaign. My focus is on two key elements: the winning of organizational support, and the raising of campaign funds. Specifically, I will analyze the degree to which a candidate's background advantages (or disadvantages) help her in the securing of resources that are essential to political success: money and endorsements.

According to the traditional conception of the party machine, party organizations use their resources not just to recruit candidates, but also to make sure they win the party's nomination. Until the invention of the political primary, the elevation of a party's chosen candidate was virtually automatic, since the party committee or caucus had the sole power of decision. Frustration by the domination of electoral politics by party "bosses," however, led to the development of the primary, which – in theory – gave control over the party to those voters who identified with it. Despite the new system, for a sustained period party leaders managed to maintain their grip on power by winning primary contests against reform candidates. According to Ware (1985) and others, advances in technology and other cultural changes finally broke the power of the traditional party machines as candidates built personal organizations independent of

the party. Since then, party organizations have been viewed as of substantially less influence than candidates in the new, candidate-centered era.

Whether this depiction is an accurate one remains an open question, however. Political organizations can still intervene in primary elections on behalf of favored candidates, whether through endorsements, the training of a cadre of volunteers, or by other means. The degree of influence of party leaders and key constituencies could be far greater than supposed if their support led to more successful fundraising or more votes, for example. Leaving the effect of political organizations on primary outcomes for the next chapter, in this chapter I will examine two related questions. First, I will analyze the degree to which party organizations and other key factions within the parties intervene in contested primaries in light of the backgrounds of announced candidates. In the second section, I will explore the consequences of these interventions with respect to fund-raising.

### Organizational Intervention & Candidate Backgrounds

As described in Chapter 3, I used information from Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports (CQ) between 1980 and 1998 to create a measure of organizational intervention in House primaries. After examining the narratives describing primary campaigns, I noted each instance in which an organized faction was mentioned as having supported a candidate in the primaries. I then grouped these organizations into categories, listed below:

African-Americans

Business

Churches

Conservatives

Teachers Unions

Environmentalists

Evangelicals

Incumbents

Organized Labor (other than teachers)

Liberals

Moderates

Newspaper endorsements

National Rifle Association

Party Leaders

Some African-American

Some Labor

Some Party

Women

This information was not gathered for incumbents, since presumably major party constituencies will support an incumbent of their own party unless there are special circumstances. Newspaper endorsements are a special case, since they are not (usually)

organized factions *per se*, but they can have considerable weight with the voters in some circumstances – the New York Times in Manhattan Democratic primaries, and the Manchester Union Leader in New Hampshire Republican primaries are two good examples. In those cases where the support of a faction was split among several candidates, they were coded separately with the “some” qualifier. These groupings are aggregated into broader categories for the purpose of statistical analysis: combined non-party support falls into the “Other Support” category, while when a candidate receives backing from any organization, they are described as having “Any Support.”

The total number of interventions on behalf of candidates in primaries by organizations is presented in Table 7.1. Non-incumbents received the full support of the party leadership in a primary in 249 cases, out of total of 3165 contested primaries – just under 8%. In 207 primaries, candidates were backed by a non-party institutional actor (6.5%). Overall, a candidate received external support for their primary bid in 414 primaries (13.1% of all primaries). While the party leadership did not back candidates in the primary with great frequency, they did do so *more often than all other groups combined*. While the data suggest that most candidates are independent political entrepreneurs, the party leadership emerges as the single most active organizational actor.

As might be expected, organizations with stronger ties to one of the two parties are prominent in that party’s primaries. African-Americans, unions, environmentalists, liberals, and women’s groups are more active in Democratic primaries, while conservatives, evangelicals, and the NRA more often intervene in Republican primaries. More importantly, the two political parties exhibited differing overall patterns. While the Republican party leadership was somewhat

more likely to support candidates in the primary (128 candidates of 1387 primaries - 9.3%) than the Democratic party (120 candidates in 1778 primaries, or 6.8%), Democratic candidates were slightly more likely to receive support from non-party sources (7% for Democrats to 6% for Republicans). Furthermore, Democratic incumbents more often attempted to choose their own successor, supporting primary candidates on 15 occasions to only 6 for Republicans.

The pattern of organizational intervention in congressional primaries is also shaped by the nature of the race, presented in Table 7.2. In almost every category, factions of the party were more likely to become involved in open-seat primaries, where they would likely have far more leverage than in races against incumbents (who so rarely lose). Party leaders supported candidates in over one-fifth of all open primaries (21%), but they did so in only 7% of out-party contests. In 25 primaries, incumbent members of the House were opposed by the full (1.26%) or partial (.99%) leadership of their own party in the primary.

I used a chi-square test to measure the differences in the organizational involvement in the Democratic and Republican primaries. I examined the distinctions between the two parties for those candidates receiving support of the party (PARTYSUPPORT), as well as those that were backed by other groups (OTHERSUPPORT), incumbents (INCUMBENTSUPPORT), and also a general category for those who received help from any source (ANYSUPPORT). The results are presented in Table 7.3

A simple test measuring the statistical differences between the parties suggests that Republican party leaders significantly more often support candidates in the primary. The Democratic candidates more often have incumbent, other, or any support, but these relationships are not statistically significant at the .05 level. These results change once seat status is controlled

for. The apparently greater Republican party involvement disappears while other differences manifest. In open seat races, Democratic candidates statistically more often receive the support of incumbents or non-party support in the primary, which may be a reflection of the greater number of active groups within the Democratic party coalition. The illusion of greater Republican intervention is probably due to the larger number of Democratic incumbents in the sample. Democratic Party leaders are unlikely to challenge their own incumbents, which necessarily inflates the percentage of primaries in which Republican party leaders support primary candidates.

The fact that a candidate of certain party in a particular kind of primary contest receives political support does not tell us a great deal. Of greater concern is *which* candidate receives political support. Understanding the degree to which a candidate's background and qualifications attract support from party stakeholders, whether party leaders or other organizations, is crucial in any effort to explain the dynamics of primary competition. For example, if candidates who have served in elective office have a greater capacity to win organizational backing, then the political structure exhibits a bias in favor of such candidates. Even if that bias is intellectually indefensible, its presence should be acknowledged. If that organizational support is of electoral importance (which will be discussed in the next chapter), then the structure of elections would be systematically rewarding those who have won office in the past (at the expense of those who have not).

I address this question in a straightforward manner by regressing organizational support on candidate characteristics. Since the decision to support is a binary one (a candidate either has the support of a group or doesn't), I use logistic regression analysis. Because organizational

support is relatively rare, too many independent variables could make logistic regression analysis infeasible, since there would not be enough cases in each cell of the analytical matrix. Thus, I use a parsimonious model with only seat status (INPARTY, OPEN) and party (DEMOCRAT, REPUBLICAN) as controls. In each iteration of the model, I use one of the candidate characteristics as the main independent variable. Two dependent variables are used: one model predicting support by party leaders, and another for support from other sources. The results of analysis are presented in Table 4. The data reported are the odds ratios, measuring the change in probability in the dependent variable given a change in the independent variable. An odds ratio of 1 would indicate no change in probability, while a number less than one indicates a reduction in probability and a positive number an increase in probability.

The results presented in Table 7.4 suggest that not only do varying candidate characteristics elicit different levels of organizational support, but also that party leaders and other organizations manifest different responses to candidate qualifications. Previous officeholders have a much greater probability of receiving support both from the party leadership and other organizations, with the highest odds ratio of any category or sub-category. Candidates who have campaign experience also have a statistically significantly greater chance of receiving external support. While candidates with political experience have an ability to win the backing of the party leadership, they have no statistically significant capacity to garner other organizational support. Candidates with only professional experience find it much more difficult to win support, with a reduced probability for both categories of support (a statistically significant relationship exists for other organizations).

Among candidates with elective experience, those who have held county, state, or state legislative office have a statistically significant greater probability of earning political support in the primary. Local officials find it easier to win party than other forms of support, with both relationships positive but only statistically significant for the former. Interestingly, former members of the House demonstrate no statistically greater ability to win organizational backing for a political comeback. This result is distinguished from those who have been nominated but not won, who had a significantly greater probability of receiving support. Candidates who ran in previous primaries also have a statistically significantly greater probability of support. Nominees for state office have a powerful ability to win party support (with an odds ratio of 4.06), but a weaker ability to do so with other organizations (positive, but not statistically significant).

Of those candidates with other forms political experience, congressional aides are the only ones with a statistically significant capacity to receive support from both party leaders and other stakeholders. Local Officials, State Officials, and Party Officials have a statistically greater chance of winning party support, but a *lower* probability of being supported by other organizations (though not significantly so). Judges and Political Aides exhibit a positive relationship with external support, but the associations are only statistically significant for party support. Federal Officials have a weak but positive ability to win support, while lobbyists have a strong (significant at .05) capacity to win non-party support. Finally, political activists appear to have more difficulty winning support from the party, but have a positive ability to win other forms of support – although neither relationship is statistically significant.

Candidates with professional backgrounds, as indicated by the general measure, have difficulty winning supporters. While some of the relationships are positive, in only two instances

– for community activists and union officials – do candidates relying on their professional expertise have a statistically significant ability to garner non-party organizational backing.

Despite their name recognition, political stakeholders demonstrate no statistically significant interest in celebrities. While dynasty candidates have a significant ability to win party support, not once in the 20 years of primaries did the party back candidates related to the incumbent. Female candidates appear more able to win non-party organizational support. Interestingly, self-financers are statistically more able to win backing from both party leaders and other organizations.

### Organizational Support and Candidate Fundraising

Organizational support for a candidate can come in many different forms, ranging from a simple endorsement to voter mobilization and direct contributions. Candidates with the backing of key elements of the party coalition are greatly advantaged not just through the direct assistance of these groups, but also because backing from factions of the party is a signal to the media and political donors that a candidate has a realistic chance of winning the election. Organizational support likely has both direct and indirect effects. A candidate that is endorsed by party leaders and the major components of the party can generate momentum as organizational endorsements lead to more media attention, more campaign contributions, and perhaps more endorsements. Candidates without the support of major party leaders or party constituencies, on the other hand, may find themselves behind in the polls and, with little expected chance to be competitive, their campaigns might struggle. This phenomenon is well represented at the presidential level through the existence of the so-called “invisible primary” (Adkins & Dowdle 2002). For example, George Bush in 1999 was able to build up substantial campaign funds, endorsements, and

favorable media attention in a positive feedback loop. Conversely, in 2007 candidates like Joseph Biden and Tommy Thompson struggled to overcome their perceived underdog status – a status that was both established and reinforced by their lack of institutional support.

A similar set of dynamics is likely at work in down-ballot contests like the U.S. House. Donors of all stripes are more likely to contribute to a candidate who they believe as a chance of winning. Since public polling at the congressional level is fairly rare (particularly by major media outlets), the effect of organizational endorsements might be enhanced with the absence of any other significant cue. We might therefore expect that candidates who are endorsed by major groups will be able to attract more campaign funds than their opponents, greatly enhancing their competitiveness.

### *Operationalization*

In this section I will test the effect that candidate characteristics, organizational intervention, and a series of control variables have on the ability of candidates to raise funds. All contested U.S. House primaries between 1984 and 1998 are included in the model, which is further divided by seat status (open, in-party, and out-party races). Since they already have viability and substantial political support, incumbents are excluded from the sample. Each party is treated separately. Two main dependent variables will be tested: total funds raised in the primary, and funds weighted by the loyalty of donors to the party. Both variables are logged to control for skewness, and are also adjusted for inflation. In each model, I have included a dummy variable indicating whether the candidate has the support of the party leadership (PARTYSUPPORT) or from political organizations (OTHERSUPPORT). In addition, if a candidate runs in a primary in which the party leadership has endorsed another candidate, he or

she is assigned “1” for the “PARTYOPPOSED” variable, indicating that he or she is not just working against other candidates, but against the party leadership. Because challenges to incumbents in the primary are likely to have little support while the incumbent has the majority, for in-party primaries the variable ANYSUPPORT is used instead. I predict that candidates with party or organizational support will receive more campaign contributions than those that do not, and that there will be a negative relationship between party opposition and funds raised.

Candidate characteristics are grouped by type: elective experience, campaign experience, political experience, and professional experience. Furthermore, separate dummies are included for celebrities, members of political dynasties (combining both incumbent and non-incumbent dynasties), women, and self-financers. I predict that candidates with elective, campaign, political experience, or who are members of dynasties will be able to raise more funds than celebrities, professionals, and women. In particular, I expect that the latter categories will have a decreased chance of attracting donations from loyal party donors. I expect that being a self-financer will be associated with primary fundraising, but have a weaker relationship with money raised from the network of loyal party donors.

This model does not measure the influence of party support relative to state party strength. If there were a single measure of party organizational strength, the variable could be included as an interactive variable. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, there is little statistical support for the existence of a unitary underlying dimension of party organizational strength. Instead, I employ eight indicators, each measuring a different dimension of organizational capacity. An interactive variable combining party support and each indicator of party strength would lead to a drastic reduction in the degrees of freedom. The party support variable measures

the general influence of party support in congressional primaries across all states without regard to institutional infrastructure. However, the eight measures of party strength (FACTION, MONEYRULES, CONTROL, ENDORSE, CAUCUS, PRIMREG, NETWORKCONT, PARTYCONT) are included as independent variables. Because party support is controlled for, these variables will measure the possible effects of party organization under the “party networking” model, in which candidates benefit from the existence of institutionalized parties whether or not they have the active support of the party leadership. Consequently, I predict that candidates will be able to raise more funds (particularly party funds) in those states with strong party organizations.

The model also includes a number of control variables. Because a multiplicity of candidates could make it difficult for any one in particular to raise funds, I have incorporated a variable measuring the number of primary candidates (the minimum will be 2, as only contested primaries are in the data set). This variable should be negatively related to campaign fundraising. Candidates should also have an easier time raising money when their party is favored by national or local conditions, or the incumbent they are challenging is perceived as vulnerable. Candidates in out-party and open seats are expected to be able to raise more funds when the national political tides are running in their direction (measured by Presidential approval controlled by party), while candidates challenging incumbents in the primary should have a more difficult time (measured by change in real disposal income through the second quarter). Candidates running in districts that lean toward their party, measured by district party bias (the operationalization of which is described in earlier chapters), should also be able to raise more money. Measures of incumbent vulnerability are also included. Candidates running against incumbents in the primary are expected to be able to raise more money when the incumbent is ideologically moderate,

suffering from scandal, has performed poorly in the previous primary, or has been re-districted. Similarly, candidates seeking the nomination in out-party primaries should be able to raise more money when the incumbent is a freshman, has been re-districted, performed poorly in the previous general election, or is ideologically extreme. In both out-party and in-party primaries I hypothesize that candidates will raise fewer funds when the incumbent has a large war chest.

### *Results*

The model performs largely as predicted, with most of the variables measuring support statistically significant and in the expected direction (see Table 7.5). The model explains between 31% and 38% of the variance in the dependent variable. In open and out-party contests of both parties, candidates with the support of the party or other organizations raise greater funds from all sources than other candidates. All of the support variables reach the .05 level of significance except for Democrats in open seats who have party support, and Democrats in out-party races with organizational support, each of which approaches statistical significance. Candidates running in open seats receive fewer funds when they are opposed by the party leadership. Opposition from the party organization has less impact in out-party races, failing to achieve statistical significance for Democrats or Republicans. Candidates running in the primary against incumbents of their own party benefit from having support from any organized group.

Candidates who have held elective office have a major advantage in raising funds. The variable ELECTEXP achieves statistical significance in all cases, with a strongly positive relationship with fundraising. The beta-weight (measuring the relative importance of each independent variable) is easily the highest of all variables, ranging from .25 to .40. Political experience is also significantly and positively related to candidate fundraising. Interestingly,

candidates with professional experience are somewhat more advantaged in fundraising than those with campaign experience. While both are significantly associated with funds raised (except for Republicans in in-party races with campaign experience), the coefficients and beta weights for those with political experience are generally higher.

While being a member of a political dynasty is helpful in raising campaign funds, the relationship is not consistent across all contests, with statistical significance not achieved for open seat Republicans and in-party Democrats. The analysis suggests that celebrities are advantaged in raising funds, with a positive and statistically significant effect for all but in-party Republicans. There are some cases in which women have a fundraising advantage. Female candidates running in open seats generally raise more funds than men (although the variable narrowly misses the .05 threshold for Republicans). Women running against Republican incumbents in the primary or in Democratic out-party races are also able to raise more money than men. Self-financed candidates are able to raise considerably more money, with a strong relationship to fundraising in all circumstances (except in-party Republican primaries). Since contributions from a candidate to his or her own campaign are not included in fund-raising measure, which measures only contributions from others, this result suggests that self-financing is a valuable factor in enhancing a candidate's perceived viability.

The presence of strong party organizations has only a limited effect on candidate fundraising. The relationship between the measures of party strength and candidate fundraising are inconsistent and only occasionally statistically significant. Party unity has a negative relationship with candidate fundraising when controlled for party, except for out-party Democratic races. The variable never achieves statistical significance. Regulation of state party

financial activity is statistically significantly and negatively related to candidate fundraising in open Democratic primaries. For Republicans, the relationship is positive but not significant in all cases. Conversely, control of state government is positively and significantly associated with candidate fundraising for Democrats, but negatively related to the dependent variable for Republicans (although only significant in open seats). Pre-primary endorsements are positively associated with fundraising once party is controlled for, and reach the .05 threshold of statistical significance for open seat Democrats and out-party Republicans. Republican candidates running in states with presidential nominating caucuses find it easier to raise money when challenging an incumbent in the primary, but a more difficult time when trying to challenge an incumbent of the opposite party. Restrictive primary rules and party donations are never statistically related to the dependent variable, but the existence of party financial networks are negatively associated with candidate fundraising for Republicans in open seats, but positive and significantly associated with fundraising in out-party races.

Among the control variables, as expected a large number of primary candidates makes it more difficult to raise money, with statistical significance for all but Republicans challenging incumbents in the primary. National political tides have a somewhat strange effect on Republicans. Controlling for other influences, Republicans raise significantly *less* money when the national political environment is favorable to them, while as predicted Democrats raise more. Candidates are also able to raise larger sums for all sources when the district favors their party in open and out-party races, although the relationship is not statistically significant for Democrats running in open seats. Facing an incumbent suffering from scandal or who has only recently been elected has no strong effect on a challenger's ability to raise funds, while re-districting only operates in the manner hypothesized for Republicans in out-party primaries. Furthermore, an

incumbent who performs poorly in the previous primary suffers no ill effects, while a weak general election margin can assist Republicans in out-party primaries in raising funds. Additionally, donors to Democratic candidates appear less likely to give money when the Republican incumbent has a substantial cash-on-hand. Finally, ideologically extreme incumbents attract better-financed opponents both in the primary *and* the general election.

Candidate experience and party support may have a different effect on those donors that are loyal to the party. While the first model examined the influence of these factors in all donors, the second model (presented in Table 7.6) tests the effect of candidate background and organizational support for donors who are party of the party financial network. Rather than total money raised from all sources, the model examines donations to primary candidates weighted by the contributor's propensity to donate to that party. The influence of the independent variables on the donations of loyal donors is comparable to that of all donors, with some exceptions. Opposition from the party organization has a much stronger negative effect on campaign fundraising by candidates among loyal donors. Celebrities have a more consistent ability to raise money from within the party financial network than from the general donor population, while political dynasts have a statistically significant ability to raise money from Republicans in open seats. Democrats challenging incumbents in the primary have a statistically significant ability to raise more money against incumbents in strongly Democratic districts. The counterintuitive result of the first iteration of the model, in which candidates raise more money against ideologically extreme incumbents of their own party, changes to a negative association and loses statistical significance in this analysis. Conversely, Democratic candidates raise statistically more money against scandal-ridden incumbents in in-party primaries. All other statistically significant variables exhibit the same direction of association as in the previous model. Contrary to

expectation, professionals, celebrities, and self-financers are equally able to raise money from loyal party donors as from the general population of contributions.

### Discussion

The results presented in this chapter suggest that the viability of a particular candidate is a function of both a candidate's specific characteristics and the context of a given race. The party leadership, constituent organizations, and party donors all look for evidence that a candidate has a reasonable expectation of being elected. The single most important attribute a candidate can possess is previous service in elective office. Candidates with elective experience are greatly advantaged in attracting organizational support and campaign contributions, fully justifying the perception that they are the most "serious" candidates for office. This result is in line with other work that uses elective experience as a measure of candidate quality (Jacobson 2000).

Furthermore, the results presented here undermine the belief that political parties do not "play favorites" in congressional primaries. In over a fifth of all open seat contests – precisely when party support would have the greatest effect – party leaders support one or another candidate. Candidates who receive this backing are advantaged in raising money even controlling for the strength of a particular state party, while candidates who are running against such a candidate find it more difficult to raise money.

The influence of other candidate characteristics is less straightforward. Candidates who have run for other offices have many of the same advantages of those who have won them, although their advantages are much weaker. Professional and political experience, while both useful for raising money, have a different effect on political organizations. While the party

leadership is much more likely to assist one who has worked with the party for years, external organizations are more eager to support candidates who have not done so.

Money, celebrity, and inherited political connections retain important advantages in the U.S. political system. Candidates who raise and spend a great deal of their own money are able to convert these resources into organized political support (whether from the party or other organizations) and raise substantial sums of money from other sources. Celebrities and those from political families find it easier to raise money, although the party leadership appears more favorable to the latter than the former. These results point to a structural bias in the political system, in which those with family, wealth, and fame are advantaged in electoral politics. The advantages accruing to these characteristics presents a challenge to the ideal of political equality – that all citizens have an equal eligibility for public office. Contrary to the party networking model of political parties, the presence or absence of institutionalized parties does little to level the playing field. These results are only preliminary, however. In later chapters I will explore whether candidates with these extra advantages are more likely to win over voters as well as contributors and party leaders, and the extent to which these advantages are diluted by strong party organizations.

Table 7.1 Organizational Support by Party

	All	D	R
Black support	6	6	0
Business support	4	2	2
Church support	3	2	1
Conservative support	9	0	9
Education support	15	15	0
Environment support	13	11	2
Evangelical support	55	1	54
Incumbent support	21	15	6
Liberal support	10	10	0
Moderate support	1	1	0
Newspaper support	14	4	10
Party support	248	120	128
Some black	1	1	0
Some labor	1	1	0
Some party	13	9	4
Women support	29	25	4
Other support	207	124	83
Partial support	15	11	4
Any support	414	220	194
Total	3165	1778	1387

Table 7.2 Organizational Support by Seat Status

	In-party	Open	Out-party
Black support	1	4	1
Business support	1	3	0
Church support	1	2	0
Conservative support	2	6	1
Education support	3	4	8
Environment support	2	7	4
Evangelical support	4	26	25
Incumbent support	0	21	0
Liberal support	6	2	2
Moderate support	1	0	0
Newspaper support	1	6	7
Party support	14	132	102
Some black	0	1	0
Some labor	0	0	1
Some party	11	1	1
Women support	3	19	7
Other support	32	105	70
Partial support	11	2	2
Any support	55	209	150
Total	1115	629	1421

Table 7.3 Difference in Support by Party &amp; Seat Status

	chi-square	sig	lambda
Party support	6.633	0.01	0.005
Incumbent support	1.997	0.158	0
Other support	1.249	0.264	0
Any support	1.784	0.182	0

Chi Square Party and Seat Status						
	In-party		Open		Out-party	
	chi-square	sig	chi-square	sig	chi-square	sig
Party support	0.453	0.501	0.321	0.571	0.025	0.874
Incumbent			4.02	0.045*		
Other support	0.121	0.728	4.2	0.04*	1.886	0.17
Any support	0.006	0.94	0.624	0.43	0.071	0.79

\*statistically significant at .05

Table 7.4 Likelihood of Support by Candidate Background

Category	Characteristic	PARTYSUPPORT	OTHERSUPPORT
General	Campaign Experience	2.519*	2.605*
General	Elected Experience	4.153*	4.324*
General	Political Experience	2.87*	1.302
General	Professional Experience	0.597	0.645*
Elected	County Elected	1.977*	1.806*
Elected	Former Member	1.648	1.147
Elected	Local Elected	1.907*	1.274
Elected	State Elected	3.925*	3.189*
Elected	State Legislature	3.468*	4.36*
Campaign	Former Nominee	2.171*	2.66*
Campaign	Ran Before	2.179*	2.747*
Campaign	Ran Lower	3.244	0
Campaign	State Nominee	4.057*	1.942
Political	Congressional Aide	3.231*	2.863*
Political	Federal Official	1.289	2.115
Political	Judge	2.612*	1.434
Political	Lobbyist	1.345	3.21*
Political	Local Official	1.614*	0.929
Political	Party Official	5.717*	0.921
Political	Political Activist	0.592	1.459
Political	Political Aide	4.221*	1.417
Political	State Official	2.819*	0.588
Professional	Accountant	0	0.998
Professional	Business	0.32	0.368
Professional	Community Activist	0.459	3.233*
Professional	Doctor	0.533	0
Professional	Executive	0.879	1.281
Professional	Farmer	0.444	0.622
Professional	Law Enforcement	1.21	0
Professional	Lawyer	0.864	0.928
Professional	Military	1.187	0
Professional	Owner	0.374	0.279
Professional	Professor	1.289	0.74
Professional	Teacher	0.149	0.148
Professional	Union official	0	3.553*

\*Statistically significant at .05

Table 7.4 continued

Other	Celebrity	1.821	1.473
Other	Dynasty	3.218*	1.344
Other	Dynasty Incumbent	0	0.847
Other	Fringe	0	0
Other	Other	0.209	0.322
Other	Party Switcher	1.095	1.333
Other	Perennial	1.669	0
Other	Scandal	0	0.945
Other	Wealthy	2.16	1.138
Other	Female	1.05	1.524*
Other	Self-financer	1.931*	1.442*

Table 7.5 Regression Analysis of Candidate Fund-raising

	Open		In-party		Out-party	
	D	R	D	R	D	R
(Constant)	1.459	4.263	0.040	-1.202	0.880	3.032
PARTYSUPPORT	0.503	0.651*			1.065*	0.888*
OTHERSUPPORT	0.938*	0.552*			0.678	0.835*
PARTYOPPOSED	-0.386*	-0.482*			0.070	-0.309
ANYSUPPORT			1.233*	1.468*		
CAMPEXP	0.543*	0.785*	0.864*	0.815	1.130*	0.950*
ELECTEXP	1.806*	1.363*	1.845*	1.762*	1.917*	1.536*
POLEXP	1.046*	0.997*	0.635*	2.196*	1.159*	1.042*
PROFEXP	0.656*	0.291*	0.579*	0.814*	0.703*	0.500*
CELEBRITY	1.252*	1.248*	1.665*	2.985	1.674*	1.794*
DYNASTY	1.094*	0.494	0.579		1.433*	1.069*
FEMALE	0.380*	0.337	-0.123	0.712*	0.325*	-0.035
SELFFINANCER	1.239*	1.082*	2.316*	2.117*	1.652*	1.399*
FACTION	-0.001	-0.009	-0.003	0.031	0.009	-0.004
MONEYRULES	-0.088*	0.003	-0.027	-0.060	-0.022	0.016
CONTROL	1.500*	-0.939*	1.582*	0.837	1.209*	-0.713
ENDORSE	0.221*	0.028	0.068	-0.012	0.123	0.300*
CAUCUS	-0.188	0.148	-0.266	0.290	-0.124	-0.630*
PRIMREG	-0.022	0.054	-0.013	0.137	0.027	-0.009
NETWORKCONT	0.017	-0.122*	0.046	-0.141	-0.034	0.126*
PARTYCONT	0.776	0.821	-0.750	-0.956	0.320	0.501
NUMCAND	-0.062*	-0.055*	-0.034*	0.135	-0.132*	-0.104*
PRESPOP	0.004*	-0.001			0.003*	-0.007*
NATLECON			-0.027	-0.010		
DISTRICTBIAS	0.422	2.957*	1.051*	0.969	1.985*	2.171*
FRESHMAN			0.085	-0.429	0.096	0.006
REDISTRICT			0.114	-0.183	0.051	0.385*
PREVPRIM			0.002	-0.001		
PREVGEN					-0.001	-0.014*
IDEO			0.003	-0.083	0.180*	0.106
INCSCANDAL			0.744*	0.425	0.273	0.293
WARCHEST			0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
adjusted r-square	0.376	0.318	0.378	0.339	0.321	0.312

\*statistically significant at .05

PARTYSUPPORT: Candidate receives party support

OTHERSUPPORT: Candidate receives other organizational support

PARTYOPPOSED: Another candidate in the primary has party support

ANYSUPPORT: Candidate has the full or partial support of either the party or another organization

CAMPEXP: Candidate has experience running for office

ELECTEXP: Candidate has been elected to office

POLEXP: Candidate has other political experience

PROFEXP: Candidate has a professional background

CELEBRITY: Candidate is a celebrity

DYNASTY: Candidate is a member of a political family

FEMALE: Candidate is a female

SELFFINANCER: Candidate is a self-financer  
 FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner  
 MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances  
 CONTROL: Share of control of state government  
 ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements  
 CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus  
 PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration  
 NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty  
 PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates  
 NUMCAND: Number of primary candidates  
 PRESPOP: Presidential approval  
 NATLECON: Change in real disposable income  
 DISTRICTBIAS: The partisan advantage in a district as measured by average presidential performance  
 REDISTRICT: Seat has been re-districted  
 FRESHMAN: Incumbent was elected in the previous election  
 PREVPRIM: Previous primary vote of incumbent  
 PREVGEN: Previous general election vote of incumbent  
 IDEO: Ideological moderation of the incumbent (for in-party primaries)  
       Ideological extremism of incumbent (for out-party primaries)  
 INCSCANDAL: Incumbent is suffering from scandal  
 WARCHEST: Cash-on-hand of the incumbent

Table 7.6 Regression Analysis of Candidate Fund-raising Weighted by Party Loyalty

	Open		In-party		Out-party	
	D	R	D	R	D	R
(Constant)	1.237	3.7	0.232	-1.261	0.698	2.934
PARTYSUPPORT	0.575*	0.788*			1.081*	1.098*
OTHERSUPPORT	0.929*	0.595*			0.567	1.023*
PARTYOPPOSED	-0.221	-0.463*			-0.102	-0.453*
ANYSUPPORT			1.224*	1.637*		
CAMPEXP	0.408*	0.705*	0.758*	0.153	0.960*	0.936*
ELECTEXP	1.894*	1.512*	1.836*	1.852*	1.896*	1.664*
POLEXP	1.148*	1.097*	0.680*	2.318*	1.058*	1.061*
PROFEXP	0.551*	0.305*	0.586*	0.797*	0.651*	0.482*
CELEBRITY	1.390*	1.313*	1.871*	3.283*	1.931*	1.907*
DYNASTY	1.214*	0.633*	0.744		1.457*	1.272*
FEMALE	0.264	0.355*	-0.156	0.800*	0.361*	-0.069
SELFFINANCER	1.210*	1.116*	2.127	1.692*	1.407*	1.362*
FACTION	-0.004	-0.004	-0.006	0.027	0.005	-0.006
MONEYRULES	-0.101*	0.002	-0.026	-0.071	-0.043	-0.02
CONTROL	1.767*	-0.974*	0.92	1.417	0.981*	-0.525
ENDORSE	0.257*	-0.118	-0.03	-0.034	0.067	0.279*
CAUCUS	-0.176	0.186	-0.202	0.18	-0.089	-0.829*
PRIMREG	-0.047	0.045	-0.048	0.128*	0.051*	-0.022
NETWORKCONT	-0.006	-0.131*	0.096	-0.153	0.01	0.125*
PARTYCONT	0.436	0.707	-1.218	-0.207	0.703	0.185
NUMCAND	-0.065*	-0.070*	-0.008	0.147	-0.106*	-0.085*
PRESPOP	0.006*	-0.002*			0.004*	-0.007*
NATLECON			-0.016	-0.094		
DISTRICTBIAS	0.679	2.624*	1.008*	2.605	2.309*	1.661*
FRESHMAN			-0.081	-0.452	0.147	-0.052
REDISTRICT			0.091	-0.314	0.04	0.355*
PREVPRIM			0.001	-0.002		
PREVGEN					-0.001	-0.015*
IDEO			-0.021	0.021	0.175*	0.097
INCSCANDAL			0.613*	0.431	0.112	0.338
WARCHEST			0	0	0	0
adjusted r-square	0.41	0.324	0.409	0.367	0.341	0.317

PARTYSUPPORT: Candidate receives party support

OTHERSUPPORT: Candidate receives other organizational support

PARTYOPPOSED: Another candidate in the primary has party support

ANYSUPPORT: Candidate has the full or partial support of either the party or another organization

CAMPEXP: Candidate has experience running for office

ELECTEXP: Candidate has been elected to office

POLEXP: Candidate has other political experience

PROFEXP: Candidate has a professional background

CELEBRITY: Candidate is a celebrity

DYNASTY: Candidate is a member of a political family

FEMALE: Candidate is a female

SELFFINANCER: Candidate is a self-financer

FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner  
 MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances  
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 IDEO: Ideological moderation of the incumbent (for in-party primaries)  
       Ideological extremism of incumbent (for out-party primaries)  
 INCSCANDAL: Incumbent is suffering from scandal  
 WARCHEST: Cash-on-hand of the incumbent

## **CHAPTER EIGHT:**

### **ELECTORAL SUCCESS**

Ultimately the success or failure of campaign is not determined by candidates, organizations, or contributors, but by the voters. A candidate can have experience, financing, and institutional support, but if she does not persuade a plurality of the primary electorate to vote for her, then all those structural advantages have amounted to little. These influences could be far greater in primary campaigns than in general elections, however. When nominees from two different parties are competing with one another, the voters have a straightforward partisan cue with which to impute information about the candidates: issue positions, responsibility for the national economy, or some other criterion. In elections contested by members of the same political party, the partisan voting cue is no longer available. While incumbency might serve as a suitable replacement in some elections, open seat and out-party primaries will leave the voters with a far more complicated task in choosing their favored candidates. In this circumstance, a candidate's personal characteristics, issue positions, and organizational support might play a crucial role in swaying the attitudes and vote choice of the voters.

#### The Model

In this chapter I explore the influence of candidate characteristics and organizational support, as well as other factors, on the vote share of candidates in U.S. House primaries, using ordinary least squares regression analysis. Candidate electoral success is measured as the

percentage of the vote received by a candidate in all contested House primaries between 1984 and 1998. The sample of House contests is divided into open seat, in-party, and out-party primaries, as well as by political party. I will first explain those variables that appear in models for open seat and in-party primaries. Subsequent sections will describe the operationalization of additional variables for races with incumbents.

Unlike most general elections, primaries are often multi-candidate affairs, making a simple vote share measure of candidate success suspect. A candidate receiving 40% of the vote in a two-person race would be soundly defeated, while a candidate with the same share of the vote in a race with nine other candidates would probably win an easy victory. To address this problem, I have included a control variable measuring the number of candidates competing in the primary. The base number of primary candidates is two (since non-contested races are excluded from the analysis), so that every additional candidate beyond two is expected to result in a decrease in the vote share for each candidate. This variable should have a negative and quite powerful effect on vote share, but only for essentially mathematical reasons – it is not a variable of great substantive importance.

The independent variables of interest fall into two categories: candidate characteristics and political support. As with previous chapters, candidates are classified according to their political and professional background using information drawn from the Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report (CQ) campaign narratives. A series of dummy variables are included indicating whether a candidate has been elected to office (ELECTEXP), run for office (CAMPEXP), had important non-elected political responsibilities (POLEXP), or has worked in professions that might appeal to the voters (PROFEXP). A considerable amount of literature supports the idea

that candidates who have won office in the past possess a set of skills that make them able to win over voters. Officeholders might also be inherently attractive to voters. Candidates with elective experience should therefore win a larger share of the vote even after controlling for other factors. Candidates with other forms of political experience are also expected to win more votes than other candidates, although they should be less successful than those with elected experience. Political relevant professional experience is expected to be the most weakly (although still positively) related to vote share, given that campaign and other forms of political experience have usually been viewed as more persuasive to voters than other types of experience (Green and Krasno 1988, but see Arnold and Hawkins 2002).

Other candidate characteristics are also included as independent variables. Some of these are expected to reduce a candidate's share of the primary vote, while others may increase a candidate's electoral success. Women have generally had a difficult time winning office in the United States. Although there is little statistical support for an inherent gender liability (see Gaddie & Bullock 2000), a re-formulated model may be able to uncover a relationship between gender and vote share. A dummy variable for women (FEMALE) is expected to be negatively associated with candidate vote share. In addition, self-financed candidates (SELFFINANCER), given their lack of political experience, are unlikely to make the best use of their superior resources. They also are subject to attacks from other candidates that they are trying to "buy the election," and neglect fundraising, which can be an important form of campaigning. (Steen 2001). I therefore hypothesize that self-financed candidates will receive a smaller share of the vote. Similarly, candidates who are suffering from scandal (SCANDAL) or who are perennial or fringe candidates (PERENNIALFRINGE) are also expected to win fewer votes.

Conversely, candidates from political families should have higher name recognition, and voters may transfer their loyalties from one family member to another. The repeated appearance on the ballot of the names Taft (in Ohio) and Kennedy (in Massachusetts) are testament to the electoral power of a famous name. Therefore I hypothesize that candidates whose relatives have been elected to office (DYNASTY) should receive a relatively greater share of the vote. Along similar lines, those candidates who have other sorts of fame (CELEBRITY) might also be able to attract a larger share of votes, although it will likely not have the influence of someone with explicitly political credentials (Green and Krasno 1988).

I have also included several control variables accounting for issue positions and ethnicity, LATINOCANDIDATE and BLACKCANDIDATE. For those primaries in which there are candidates from minority ethnic backgrounds (Black, or Latino), a candidate is expected to receive a greater share of the vote the larger his ethnic group is in the district. The variable is weighted by the number of candidates from that ethnic group. For example, if a congressional district were 60% Latino and 40% black, with two Latino candidates and one black candidate, the two Latino candidates would receive a rating of .3 ( $.6/2 = .3$ ), and the African-American candidate would receive a rating of .4 ( $.4/1 = .4$ ).

In primaries where the candidates take a different position on the abortion issue, I have given each candidate a rating divided by the number of candidates with that position. I weight the salience of the abortion issue in that state using the reported weekly church attendance, reflecting the relationship between church attendance and pro-life attitudes about abortion (McIntosh et al. 1979, Hertel and Hughes 1987). In a primary with 2 pro-choice and 1 pro-life candidates in a state with 40% church attendance, the pro-choice candidate would receive a

rating of .3 ( $.6/2 = .3$ ), and the pro-life candidate would receive a rating of .4 ( $.4/1 = .4$ ).

Similarly, primaries in which the candidates stake out different ideological positions (liberal, conservative, moderate), receive scores relative to the number of candidates and the ideology of the district (measured with the Ardoin & Garand metric). These variables are operationalized somewhat differently between the two parties. Since at least 1980, the Republicans have been defined as the conservative, pro-life party, while generally the Democrats have become a liberal, pro-choice party. Primary candidates who embrace these party positions should do better at the ballot box. Therefore, for Republicans, pro-life and conservative candidates receive a positive rating, and for Democrats pro-choice and liberal candidates should receive a positive rating. In each instance, the variables IDEO and ABORTION are predicted to be positively related to vote share.

Aside from candidate characteristics, the other set of variables predicted to influence candidate vote share deal with the organizational support for each candidate. Organizational support can help candidates indirectly through campaign contributions (as described in the previous chapter), but may also do so directly. Party leaders and major constituency groups can issue endorsements, which could provide valuable information to voters when seeking a means of differentiating between the candidates. If a party leader (especially an elected official) gives public support or campaigns on behalf of a candidate, or a candidate is endorsed by an organizational like the Sierra Club, the voters can impute issue positions and character traits on the endorsed candidate, thereby easing the decision-making process. Beyond this, organizations can also provide full-scale campaign support, recruiting volunteers and providing staff. EMILY's List, for example, recruits, funds, and provides consultant support for its chosen candidates.

With respect to measures of organizational support, candidates receive a coding of “1” if they have the support of the party leadership (PARTYSUPPORT), or backing from some other organization, group, or media entity (OTHERSUPPORT). Candidates with the support of party leaders or other organizations are hypothesized to receive a greater share of the vote. Conversely, a candidate whose intra-party rivals receive the support of the party also receive a coding of “1” for the PARTYOPPOSED variable. Candidates who are running an insurgent campaign against the party leadership are expected to receive a smaller share of the vote, controlling for other factors. I have included both the PARTYSUPPORT and PARTYOPPOSED variables to capture two different situations – the receipt of support and the active opposition of the party leaders. These variables are not perfectly negatively correlated, and indeed have a weak correlation. Because primaries frequently have multiple candidates, a party endorsement’s will create a positive effect for only one candidate, but will lead to negative effects for all the other candidates competing in the primary.

If money truly is the “mother’s milk of politics,” we should expect that candidates who out-raise their opponents should win a greater proportion of the primary vote. Whatever a candidate’s assets or liabilities, they will make little impression on the voters if the candidate is unable to *communicate* with the electorate. CQ campaign narratives, and electoral histories in general, are littered with candidates who seemed formidable “on paper” but failed to raise enough money to wage a viable campaign. As with measuring vote share, simply inserting the dollar amount raised by a candidate, even controlled for inflation and logarithmically transformed, would not reflect the effect of multiple candidacies. A candidate raising 33% of all primary funds in a 2-person race would have been outspent 2-1, while a candidate doing so in a multi-candidate race could be the leading fundraiser. Therefore, in order to capture the effect of

campaign fundraising, I have included the FUNDINGSHARE variable as a control, which I calculated as the candidate's percentage of funds raised for the primary for all candidates. This variable does not include contributions by candidates to their own campaigns, for two reasons: 1) loans and donations from the candidate are not included in the FEC data set employed in this analysis, and 2) donations from others is likely a form of political currency on its own, and an indicator of political support (Steen 2006). The greater a candidate's share of campaign funds, the greater should be their share of the vote.

## Results

### *Open Seat Primaries*

The results of the analysis are generally as predicted, with most of the variables related to vote share in the expected direction (The results for all three models are presented in Table 8). The model has considerable explanatory power, with an adjusted r-squared of .765 for Democrats and .729 for Republicans. The base vote (represented by the constant) for Democratic and Republicans is 21.7% of the vote. The two most powerful independent variables are the number of primary candidates and relative fundraising, with beta weights of .27 to .28 for the former and .64 to .65 for the latter, and each reaching the .05 level of statistical significance. More importantly, the model underscores the importance of adequate funding for congressional candidates. For every 1% of the share of total funds raised, a candidate receives .5% of the vote for Republicans and .4% for Democrats. Combined with the constant, this means that, irrespective of other factors, a Republican candidate in a two-person race with 50% of primary funds would be expected to receive 46.7% of the primary vote.

The other independent variables, while not as influential as the role of money, thus play an essential role in determining primary success. For both parties, a candidate's campaign, political, and elected experience has a statistically significant and positive effect on votes. Professional experience, on the other hand, is not statistically significantly related to the dependent variable for either party. While political experience has roughly the same effect for both parties, with a 2.5% increase for Democrats and 2.8% for Republicans, there are distinctions between the two parties with respect to elective and campaign experience. Democratic voters appear to place a higher premium on previous office-holding than Republicans, with such candidates gaining 5% of the vote for Democrats, and only 3.8% for Republicans. Conversely, candidates with campaign experience typically receive an addition 6.2% of the Republican primary vote and only 2.6% of the Democratic vote.

Other candidate characteristics also have a divergent impact on the parties' primary voters. Contrary to expectations, female candidates actually gain primary votes by virtue of their gender, with a 1% (not statistically significant) gain for Republicans and a 4.2% gain for Democrats (the latter achieving statistical significance). While Democrats are more willing to back candidates from political families, Republicans are more likely to support celebrities. Candidates with family members in politics receive a statistically significant 4.2% increase in vote share for Democrats and a not significant 1.3% gain for Republicans. Celebrities in Republican primaries gain 8.1% of the vote (reaching statistical significance), while celebrity candidates in Democratic primaries win a not significant 5.1% increase in vote share.

Consistent with the hypotheses, candidates who have a reputation for being fringe or perennial candidates, are suffering from scandal, or who are self-financers receive a smaller

share of voters, although none of the relationships are statistically significant. Perennial/fringe status costs a candidate 6% of the vote for Democrats and 6.5% for Republicans; and scandals cost candidates 4% in Democratic primaries and 6.7% in Republican ones. Supporting the work of Steen (2006), self-financed candidates do less well than other candidates, although the relationship is not large. Candidates who fund their own campaigns receive 1.1% less of the vote for Democrats and only .1% for Republicans.

Racial and ideological disputes demonstrate little power to move primary voters. In only one case is the effect appreciable, with coefficients invisible to the third decimal place. The sole exception is for ideological battles in Republican primaries, where the relationship is both very weak (changing only .1% of votes), and in the reverse direction anticipated. Conservative candidates in the primary actually do *worse* when running against their moderate intra-party rivals, controlling for other factors. This result is rather remarkable given that the model controls for political experience and money raised, which I will discuss further later in the chapter.

Finally, the effects of political support or opposition are similar for both parties, with the coefficients of each operating in the expected direction, and all statistically significantly related to vote share except one (Republican party opposition). Backing from the party leadership results in an additional 5% of the votes for Democrats and 4.1% for Republicans, while opposition from the party costs Democratic candidates 2.1% of the vote and Republicans 1.5%. Support from party constituencies is actually more helpful than party support.

### *Out-Party Primaries*

The determinants of candidate vote share are similar for open and out-party primaries. The explanatory power of the model is somewhat lower, with an adjusted r-squared of .696 for Democrats and .621 for Republicans. The constant (representing expected vote share if all other variables are zero) is substantially higher than in open primaries, however, with the typical Democrat receiving 35.8% of the vote exclusive of other factors, and Republican candidates receiving 41.1% of the primary vote share. The number of candidates and relative fundraising remain the most influential variables. Each additional candidates depresses the expected vote by 4.4% for Democrats and 5.1% for Republicans, a greater effect than in open primaries, while a 1% increase in the proportion of primary funds raised increases a candidate's vote share by .3%.

As with open primaries, candidates in out-party primaries receive a greater share of the vote when they have relevant political experience, with a greater effect for Democrats than Republicans, and with campaign and elected experience achieving statistical significance for both parties. Having served in elective office earns a candidate an extra 7% of the vote for Democrats and 5.6% among Republicans. Campaign experience actually has a higher coefficient for Democrats, with an 8.8% point increase in vote share, although the standard errors are somewhat higher than for elected experience. Candidates running in Republican primaries receive somewhat less, with a 5% increase in vote share. Professional and political experience is far more useful to Democratic than Republican candidates. While the relationship between these two independent variables and vote share is positive for both parties, the magnitude is much greater for Democrats, whose candidates receive a 2.6% increase in votes for political experience and a 2% increase for professional experience, with both achieving the .05 level of statistical

significance. These backgrounds have a marginal effect for Republicans, with political experience earning a .2% increase in votes and professional experience resulting in a 1.2% increase. Neither relationship is statistically significant.

Also similar to the results for open primaries, women, celebrities, and those from political families tend to receive a greater share of the primary vote, while scandal and perennial/fringe status reduce a candidate's vote share. With the exception of scandal, these candidate background factors have a greater impact on Democratic than Republican primary voters. Women, celebrities, and dynasty candidates all result in statistically significant positive increases in vote share for Democrats, with statistically insignificant increases for Republican candidates. Democratic women receive a 3.4% bonus in vote share, while Republican women add only 1% of the vote. Celebrities running in Democratic primaries win an impressive 15.3% more of the vote. Republican celebrities seeking the nomination receive a much smaller share (5.7%) of the vote. Candidates from political families receive 6.7% more of the vote in Democratic primaries, and only 2.2% more votes in Republican primaries.

Unlike in open primaries, candidates who fund their own campaigns actually do better in out-party primaries, especially among Republicans. While Democratic self-financers add a tiny .1% of the vote, Republican self-financers typically receive an additional 2.8% of the vote. As with open primaries, ideology, positions on abortion, and ethnic status has little effect on Democratic or Republican primary voters. In no instance is the relationship between these factors and vote share statistically significant, with substantive effects ranging from 0% to .3%. The effect of scandal and perennial/fringe status also muted, failing to exhibit a statistically significant relationship with vote share for both parties.

Support from the party leadership has a somewhat stronger benefit for candidates running in out-party than open primaries. Democratic candidates with the backing of the party leadership receive 6.3% more of primary votes, while Republican candidates receive an additional 5.3%. Opposition from the party leadership has a major negative effect on Republican candidates, with an 8.1% penalty. Democratic candidates opposed by party leaders lose only 3.5% of the vote. Both party support and opposition have a statistically significant effect on vote share. Support from other political organizations has a dramatically different influence in out-party primaries and between the two parties. Support from groups other than the party leadership actually results in a statistically insignificant .9% decline in Democratic primary votes. For Republicans, backing from party constituencies results in a statistically and substantively significant 7.1% increase in votes.

### *In-Party Primaries*

The presence of an incumbent significantly alters the character of a primary election campaign. The model employed in this analysis excludes incumbents – it strictly analyzes the performance of challengers to incumbents, not the incumbents themselves. Most of the independent variables from the open seat/out-party models have been retained: political background, gender, celebrity, self-financers, dynasty candidates, perennial/fringe candidates, scandal, share of spending, and abortion are all included. The party leadership and major party constituency typically support most incumbents' re-nomination efforts. This makes organizational backing all the more critical for those challengers running against incumbents in the primary. I have combined party or other organizational support (which is quite limited) into a

combined dummy variable (ANYSUPPORT). Because the party organization will usually support the incumbent, I have included the eight measures of party organizational strength: party unity, regulation of party finances, control of state government, pre-primary endorsement procedures, the use of presidential nominating caucuses, primary and party registration rules, the network of party contributions, and direct party contributions to candidates. Operationalization of these variables is discussed in previous chapters. All of the party strength variables are expected to be negatively associated with the performance of primary candidates.

I have also included several measures of incumbent vulnerability. While previous research suggests that voters hold parties rather than individual candidates responsible for the state of the economy, anecdotal evidence suggests that bad economic times lead to a more generalized anti-incumbent sentiment among the electorate. To capture this potential relationship, I have included the change in national real disposable income by the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, before most primaries are held (NATLECON). During good economic times, i.e., when the NATLECON variable is larger, I expect challengers to receive a smaller percentage of the vote. I have also included dummy variables for those races in which the incumbent is a freshman (FRESHMAN), has suffered from scandal (SCANDAL), or has experienced re-districting (REDISTRICT) - all of which are expected to be positively associated with challenger vote share. Ideological voting is operationalized by taking the standardized difference between the incumbent's voting record (measured by the NOMINATE score) and the ideological disposition of the district (the Ardoin-Garand measure), adjusted for political party. Candidates with higher ideological scores have more extreme voting records in the direction favored by their party (conservatives for Republicans, liberals for Democrats). Therefore, I predict a negative relationship between the incumbent's ideological extremity and the primary vote of the

challenger. I have also combined the measures of ethnic candidacies into a single metric (RACIALCANDIDATE) for races in which the challenger is of a different race than the incumbent.

While not as powerful as the results for open seat and out-party primaries, the model for primary challenges to incumbents still explains a substantial proportion of the variation in vote share, with an adjusted r-squared of .475 for Democrats and .547 for Republicans (see Table 8.3). The first and most glaring distinction between the two parties is the difference in the constants. Exclusive of other factors, the typical challenger to Democratic incumbents begins with only 7.7% of the vote, while Republican candidates have a base vote of 22.3%. Thus while Democratic challengers begin with very little chance of victory, Republican incumbents tend to have more serious challenges. Additional primary candidates reduce the expected vote more for Republicans (by 4.1%) than Democrats (by .7%), a statistically significant relationship in for both parties. Furthermore, a one percent increase in relative fundraising increases Democratic challenger's votes share by .3%, while enhancing Republicans by .5%, with both effects with p-values below .05. Note, however, that because the models for the two parties are slightly different, a comparison between the two is only suggestive.

Personal characteristics continue to play an important role in voter decision-making. Challengers with experience in elected office receive 5.9% more of the primary vote for Democrats and 7.4% for Republicans, with both relationships statistically significant at the .05 level. The other variables measuring personal characteristics exhibit differences between the two parties. While the coefficients for campaign experience are roughly equal, with a 3.6% increase in vote share for Democrats and 4% for Republicans, the relationship is only statistically

significant for Democrats. Professional experience is also somewhat more salient for Democratic (1.8%) than Republicans (.8%), again with a statistically significant relationship only for Democratic candidates. Conversely, political experience is of great help to Republicans, with a statistically significant 7% increase in expected vote share, with Democrats receiving a statistically insignificant 1% greater share of the vote.

Among the other personal characteristics adhering to candidates, self-financing is the greatest boon to Democratic challengers, with a statistically significant 4.3% increase in vote share, compared to only a .5% increase for Republican candidates (and not statistically significant). The effect of other characteristics (gender, celebrity, dynasty, fringe status, scandal) is relatively weak, with only the effect of a female Democratic challenging an incumbent in the primary reaching statistical significance. Women receive a 1% increase in vote share, for Democratic candidates. There were no cases in the sample in which a dynasty candidate, perennial/fringe, or scandal-ridden challenger against incumbents appeared in the Republican primaries.

As with previous analyses, the abortion issue had an imperceptible influence on the voters, with less than a .1% effect. There is also a small but statistically significant .1% increase in vote share for candidates of a different race from the incumbent, controlling for the population of the group in that district. Challengers did better when facing incumbents suffering from scandal, earning an additional (and statistically significant) 5.3% in Republican primaries and 1.6% (but statistically insignificant) proportion of the primary vote for Democratic challengers. While redistricting had no statistically significant effect in Democratic primaries (contrary to the hypothesis), Republicans challenging incumbents increased their share of the vote by 2.8% after

redistricting. Conversely, facing a Republican freshman was a slight liability, with a non-significant .1% decline in vote share, while Democrats challenging freshman incumbents received 2.5% more the vote, achieving the .05 threshold p-value. There is some evidence for an anti-incumbent effect during poor economic times, with a negative relationship between increases in real disposable income and challenger vote share of .4% for Democrats and .5% for Republicans, with the relationship statistically significant only for Democrats. The effect of incumbent ideology was not statistically significant for either party.

Political support and party organizational strength operated quite differently with respect to the two political parties. Candidates with any support were helped, but more so for Democrats, whose candidates received a statistically significant additional 9.4% of the vote, while Republican challengers saw their share of the vote increase by a statistically insignificant 3.8%. Unified parties, pre-primary endorsements, state political dominance, and the use of caucuses had no statistically significant effect on primary challengers' vote shares. More importantly, states with restrictive primary rules and party registration provided a small but statistically significant boost to challenges to incumbents of .5% for Democrats and .6% for Republicans. On the other hand, unregulated state parties undermined the electoral prospects for Republican challengers, with a statistically significant 1% reduction for Republican candidates.

Several measures of party organizational strength operated in opposite directions based on the party in question. The existence of party financial networks, however, assisted Democratic challengers to incumbents with a .8% increase in vote share. Republican candidates received 1.8% fewer votes in such states. Although financially active state parties had no statistically significant effect for Democrats, Republican candidates were helped with a statistically

significant and quite substantial 15.9% *increase* in vote share. This counterintuitive result defies easy explanation. An examination of the specific races in which a challenger performed particularly well against a Republican incumbent in active state parties presents one possibility: in some races, an incumbent was sufficiently estranged from the state party organization that the party either tacitly or implicitly supported the challenger. For example, in 1988 the moderate Tom Campbell defeated the more conservative Ernie Konnyu in a swing district with 58% of the vote. In other words, the results for this variable could be a result of the assumption that the state party supports the incumbent in contested primaries.

## Discussion

The results of this chapter indicate that campaign funds, while critical to a competitive candidacy, by themselves may be insufficient to win a primary victory. While a candidate's characteristics and the support of political organizations are not the most important factors in moving voters, they can provide a critical increment of votes. Political relevant experiences do appear to persuade voters that a candidate is plausible, while other personal factors like gender, family, and name are also useful in winning electoral support. Ethnic identity and issue positions, however, had little effect on electoral results.

Party leaders and other political organizations do intervene in congressional primaries, and these interventions are not without effect. While disentangling the effects of incumbency and party and organizational support for in-party races is difficult, the results of the open seat and out-party model supports the idea that party and organizational endorsements are well worth having, adding an additional 4 to 7 points to a candidate's electoral total – enough to make the

difference between defeat and victory in a close contest. The influence of party and organizational intervention is great enough that a party's active opposition is a considerably worse eventuality for insurgent candidates than simple neutrality. Political support of any sort appears to be especially important for challengers facing Democratic incumbents in the primary.

The distinctions between the parties are driven by more than just seat status – there is some evidence for a somewhat different approach to candidate evaluation by primary voters. Experience in elective office, political dynasties, and party support is more attractive to Democratic primary voters across types of races. Democrats also prefer female candidates more than Republicans do.

Both the machine and networking model of party organizations have little support, with somewhat different results for the two major political parties. Assuming that party organizations support incumbents, a machine model would suggest a negative relationship between party organizational strength and the performance of primary challengers. State regulation of party finances do operate in this way for both parties, but party unity, control of state government, the use of caucuses, and restrictive primary rules have a positive relationship to the vote share of primary challengers to incumbents. These relationships, while weak either substantively, statistically, or both, point instead to the networking model of party organizations; in which candidates take advantage of the contacts made in institutionalized parties to promote their candidacies. Other measures of party strength operate differently depending on the political party in question. Pre-primary endorsements and state parties that contribute a great deal (per capita) to federal candidates in general elections have a negative relationship to vote share for Democrats, but a positive one for Republicans. Alternatively, a network of party donors assists Democratic

challengers while handicaps Republican ones. The relationship between state party financial activity and challenger performance is particularly large, and somewhat surprising, with a nearly 16% gain in vote share in such states. As the more institutionalized party, Republican candidates may benefit directly from the strong party apparatus, while the more diffuse Democrats rely on extensive party networks. As with previous chapters, a more detailed examination of the direct and indirect effects of party institutionalization is reserved for Chapter 10.

Table 8. Regression Analysis of Primary Candidate Vote Share

	Open		Out-party		In-party	
	D	R	D	R	D	R
(Constant)	0.217	0.217	0.358	0.411	0.077	0.223
FEMALE	0.042*	0.01	0.034*	0.01	0.010*	-0.021
CELEBRITY	0.051	0.081*	0.153*	0.057	0.063	-0.014
PARTYSUPPORT	0.050*	0.041*	0.063*	0.053*		
OTHERSUPPORT	0.059*	0.059*	-0.009	0.071*		
ANYSUPPORT					0.094*	0.038
CAMPEXP	0.026*	0.062*	0.088*	0.050*	0.036*	0.04
ELECTEXP	0.050*	0.038*	0.070*	0.056*	0.059*	0.074*
POLEXP	0.025*	0.028*	0.026*	0.002	0.01	0.070*
PROFEXP	0.013	0	0.020*	0.012	0.018*	0.008
NUMCAND	-0.021*	-0.020*	-0.044*	-0.051*	-0.007*	-0.041*
SELFFINANCER	-0.011	-0.001	0.001	0.028*	0.043*	0.005
DYNASTY	0.042*	0.013	0.067*	0.022	0.044	
PERENNIALFRINGE	-0.06	-0.065	-0.055	-0.007	-0.042	
FUNDINGSHARE	0.004*	0.005*	0.003*	0.003*	0.003*	0.005*
PARTYOPPOSED	-0.021*	-0.015	-0.035*	-0.081*		
SCANDAL	-0.04	-0.067	-0.091	-0.14	0.079	
IDEO	0	-0.001*	0	-0.001		
ABORTION	0	0	0.003	0.001	0	0
FACTION					0.001	0.001
MONEYRULES					-0.002	-0.010*
CONTROL					0.025	0.09
ENDORSE					-0.003	0.011
CAUCUS					0.003	0.001
PRIMREG					0.005*	0.006*
NETWORKCONT					0.008*	-0.018*
PARTYCONT					-0.077	0.159*
NATLECON					-0.004*	-0.005
IDEOLOGY					0.007	-0.008
INCSCANDAL					0.016	0.053*
FRESHMAN					0.025*	-0.001
REDISTRICT					-0.009	0.028*
BLACKCAND	0	0	-0.002	0		
LATINOCAND	0		-0.001	0		
RACIALCAND					0.001*	
adjusted r-squared	0.765	0.729	0.696	0.621	0.475	0.547

\*statistically significant at .05

FEMALE: Candidate is a female

CELEBRITY: Candidate is a celebrity

PARTYSUPPORT: Candidate receives party support

OTHERSUPPORT: Candidate receives other organizational support

ANYSUPPORT: Candidate has the full or partial support of either the party or another organization

CAMPEXP: Candidate has experience running for office

ELECTEXP: Candidate has been elected to office

POLEXP: Candidate has other political experience

PROFEXP: Candidate has a professional background  
NUMCAND: Number of primary candidates  
SELFFINANCER: Candidate is a self-financer  
DYNASTY: Candidate is a member of a political family  
PERENNIALFRINGE: Candidate is a perennial or fringe candidate  
FUNDINGSHARE: Candidate's share of all money raised for the primary  
PARTYOPPOSED: Another candidate in the primary has party support  
SCANDAL: Candidate is suffering from scandal  
IDEO: Ideological positioning of the candidate relative to other candidates  
ABORTION: Position on abortion relative to other candidates, controlled by party  
FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner  
MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances  
CONTROL: Share of control of state government  
ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements  
CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus  
PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration  
NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty  
PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates  
NATLECON: Change in real disposable income  
IDEOLOGY: Ideological moderation of the incumbent  
INCSCANDAL: Incumbent is suffering from scandal  
FRESHMAN: Incumbent was elected in the previous election  
REDISTRICT: Seat has been re-districted  
BLACKCAND: Candidate is African-American  
LATINOCAND: Candidate is Latino  
RACIALCAND: Candidate is of a different race than the incumbent

**CHAPTER NINE:**  
**THE COMPARATIVE EFFECTS OF PARTY ORGANIZATION**  
**ON ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE**

Model Specification

Thus far, in each chapter I have analyzed the steps in the electoral process as discrete events: candidate entry, the elicitation of political support, fundraising, and finally the winning of votes. I have examined the influence of party organizational structure on various political actors during the primary process – candidates, key political stakeholders, financial contributors, and the voters themselves. These phases are not entirely distinct, however. If party institutionalization influences each stage of the primary process, then party organizations' effects on the final outcomes of primary campaigns will have both direct effects on electoral outcomes, as well as indirect effects through the other decision-makers (party and organizational leaders, candidates, and contributors). There is an implicit causal model within the analysis of congressional primary campaigns, and therefore a path analytic model would seem the best approach in examining the total effects of party organizational structure on candidate success.

There are a number of methodological and substantive complications that must be addressed, however. First, party organizational structure does not simply have an effect on candidate emergence, but an interactive effect with each component of the model. In particular, candidates of various types may perform differently depending on the party's organizational

arrangement. One of the principal purposes of this dissertation is to explore the comparative effect of party structure on the success of candidates with different characteristics, i.e., candidates with elective, campaign, political, and professional experience, as well as so-called “elite” candidates with money, celebrity or who are from political families. As a consequence, party organizational structure needs to be tested not just for its influence on who chooses to run, but also on the ability of those candidates to elicit support from various sources.

If party organizational structure were a unidimensional phenomenon – if Cotter et al. were correct in asserting that there is an underlying, unitary variable measuring party “strength” – then a series of interactive variables could be included in the model in order to capture the combined effect of candidate backgrounds and party institutionalization. Unfortunately, the evidence does not support this contention. Rather than one overarching measure of party organization, there are a number of independent measures – each of which influences the process in different (and often contrary) ways. To include interactive terms combining each of the eight measures of party strength *and* candidate background would greatly reduce the degrees of freedom. With eight independent measures of party organizational strength, several candidate characteristics, and at least four other important factors (party support, organizational support, the number of candidates, fundraising), such a large number of interaction terms would greatly reduce the explanatory power of the model and risk Type II errors.

To cope with these problems, I have employed a multiple-model strategy. The pool of candidates is divided into four categories: 1) elected experience, 2) campaign and political experience, 3) professional experience alone, and 4) elites (a combination of dynasty candidates, self-financers, and celebrities). The pool of candidates is also divided by political party. I

conducted a path analysis using the AMOS structural equation modeling program for each model. A simplified version of the model is presented in Figure 9.

The exogenous variables comprising the model are the eight measures of party organizational capacity discussed in previous chapters: party unity (FACTION), control of state government (CONTROL), primary and voter registration rules (PRIMREG), regulation of state party finances (MONEYRULES), pre-primary endorsements (ENDORSE), presidential nominating caucuses (CAUCUS), state party financial contributions (PARTYCONT), and the network of loyal party donors (NETWORKCONT). The endogenous variables include: the number of primary candidates (NUMCAND), support or opposition by party leaders (ORDPARTYSUPPORT), support or opposition by other organizations (ORDOTHERSUPPORT), share of primary fundraising (FUNDINGSHARE), and finally proportion of the primary vote (VOTESHARE). In order to reduce the number of endogenous variables, I have combined the organizational support and opposition measures into a single ordinal measure, with candidates who have received support coded “1,” primaries where organizations are neutral or where the candidate is both opposed and supported by an organization are coded “0,” and those candidates who are opposed by an organization coded “-1.”

With this model, party organizational structure is assumed to influence the number of primary candidates, the likelihood that a candidate will receive party or other organizational support, fundraising success, and vote share. The measures of party organizational structure are therefore tested for their direct effect on electoral performance, as well as indirect effects through organizational support, the number of candidates, and fundraising. The total effects of each party

organizational measure are then compared across models. Under the “machine” model of party organizational influence, measures of party institutionalization should benefit candidates with more political experience; while under the “party networking” model, candidates with political and campaign experience should fare better than others in states with highly institutionalized parties. Candidates with elite backgrounds are hypothesized to benefit from weak party organizations under either model.

I have restricted the sample of candidates to those running for party nominations that can be judged “worth winning.” These include all open seat primaries, as well as those out-party primaries in which the incumbent received 55% or less in the previous general election. Those candidates running against incumbents in the primary and for nominations that are almost sure to lead to electoral defeat are likely characterized by very different dynamics, since the odds of victory are so low that “victory” might not be a candidates’ criterion at all (Canon 1990). Party and organizational support would also be even more highly skewed in a combined model. Another possibility would be to divide the sample into the three basic kinds of races (open, in-party, and out-party), but doing so would lead to a further reduction in sample size – which has already been reduced to around 300-600 cases for the separate iterations of the model.

I have made a number of simplifying assumptions in the path analytic model. First, I have excluded any interactive effects between the measures of party institutionalization and party support or fundraising. As discussed previously, doing so would dramatically reduce the degrees of freedom. For the purposes of this analysis, therefore, party organizational structure is presumed to influence the likelihood that a faction of the party will support a candidate in the primary or that funds will be available, but the magnitude of this support is not sensitive to the

degree of party institutionalization. Finally, additional variables that can influence vote share, such as national political tides, candidate ideology, or the partisan leanings of the district have been excluded in order to fashion a model with sufficient degrees of freedom. Each additional variable requires not only an estimate for its effect on vote share, but also estimates for its effect on other variables as well as an error term. As a consequence, the inclusion of even a few endogenous variables quickly leads a large reduction in the degrees of freedom. Note that the path analysis employs Maximum Likelihood Estimation.

I test different conceptions of party organization in this chapter, each of which comes with its own distinct set of hypotheses. Under the candidate-centered, or entrepreneurial, model of party organizations, candidates with experience in elective office should benefit most from strong party organizations, since under this conception the parties are essentially at their disposal. Under the machine model, party support should be the most important indicator of candidate success. The party networking model, stemming from the “mass-membership” conception of party organizations, would suggest that candidates with campaign and political experience should benefit most from highly institutionalized parties. Finally, candidates with “elite” backgrounds – i.e. celebrities, political dynasts, and the wealthy, are likely to encounter the most resistance from party organizations under any of the three models. Furthermore, I predict that for the Republicans, which by most accounts are the more highly institutionalized and professional of the two parties, party organizational strength will play a greater role in determining candidate success than for the more fractious Democrats. In addition, support from external organizations should have a more powerful effect on a candidate’s vote share for Democrats than Republicans.

## Results & Analysis

The summarized results of the path analysis are presented in Table 9. I have excluded the typical path analytic figure, because the number of parameters involved makes the figure difficult to interpret. Table 1 presents the total standardized effects of each variable on the dependent variable (VOTESHARE) for each type of candidate. While t-tests are possible for each path, there is no available method of measuring the statistical significance of total effects. Chi-square strength of model tests indicate that in no instance is the model statistically significantly different from the null, which strongly qualifies the results of the analysis. This weakness is likely due to the relatively small sample sizes and large number of parameters, with a ratio of parameters to cases of 1-5, which is below the preferred ratio of 10-1 or more (Kline 1998). Thus, the analysis below should be viewed as suggestive rather than determinative.

As indicated in Tables 9.1 and 9.2, the single most important influence on electoral outcomes is the share of fundraising for each candidate. This variable exerts a strong direct influence, ranging from a standardized coefficient of .537 to .702, exercising a stronger effect than any other variable for every type of candidate. Most of the total effect of the other independent variables exists through the medium of campaign fundraising; thus most of the power of party institutional organization appears to be exerted indirectly by way of donor behavior, rather than directly on voters. The results suggest that party organization and endorsements act as important signals to campaign contributors, whose decision to support (or not support) a candidate is of critical importance for a campaign's success. The second most influential variable is the number of primary candidates, which as expected has a strongly

negative influence on candidate vote share. The results are fairly consistent, between -.492 and -.579.

After fundraising and the number of candidates, the variable with the greatest effect on electoral outcomes is support from party organizations. Party support has a positive effect on candidate vote share, with elected officials benefiting the most (.285 for Democrats, .277 for Republicans), and professionals benefiting the least (.138 for Democrats, .212 for Republicans). Support from other political groups (OTHERSUPPORT) also enhances candidate electoral success, although the relationship is less powerful than for party support. Among Democrats, candidates with elite backgrounds receive the greatest increase in vote share (.19), followed by elected officials (.16), those with campaign or political experience (.155), and finally professionals (.101). The effect of non-party group backing is weaker for Republicans, with professionals (.133) and elected officials (.132) receiving the greatest boost in vote share, followed by political activists (.09) and candidates who are celebrities, from political families, or who are self-financers (.058).

Turning next to the influence of measures of party organizational strength on primary outcomes, the results suggest that the effects of party institutionalization varies depending on the type of candidate and the political party. A simple index summing the total standardized effects of each of the eight measures of party strength would suggest major differences between the two political parties and among types of candidates, with elected officials and elites benefitting most from strong party institutions in Democratic primaries, and elites in Republican primaries. Employing such an index is suspect, however. As discussed in previous chapters, party organizational strength is not a single phenomenon, but rather exists along a number of distinct

dimensions. A single index, which assumes that there is such a thing as party “strength,” would conceal important distinctions among the measures. Consequently, I discuss the total effects of party organizational structure in some detail, focusing on each measure in turn.

Indicators of party organizational capacity can be grouped into three rough categories – financial, structural, and behavioral. Financial measures include the activity of party committees in general elections, the existence of a pool of loyal party donors, and regulation of state party financial activity. Structural measures include the use of pre-primary endorsements, restrictive primary rules and the use of party registration, and presidential nominating caucuses. Finally, behavioral measures include the unity of the party (as measured by gubernatorial primary elections) and the degree to which the party controls state government. It is important to note that these are conceptual, rather than statistical categories – the categorization described above does *not* imply the use of a structural equation model to measure latent variables. Such an analysis would be inappropriate, as the factor analysis conducted in Chapter 2 indicates that there is no such underlying statistical commonality.

Looking first at candidates in Democratic primaries (Table 9.1), among the financial indicators of party strength, party donations to federal candidates in general elections (PARTYCONT) and a network of party donors (NETWORKCONT) have a positive relationship to candidate vote share. Candidates with political or campaign backgrounds benefit the most from running in states with financial active state committees, with a positive standardized total effect on vote share of .07. Elected officials (.042), professionals (.039), and elites (.03) enjoy an increase in vote share as well. Similarly, political activists running for Congress receive a significant advantage when running in states where there is a large pool of loyal contributors to

the party, with the largest positive effect on vote share of any candidate in any category (.167). Elites (.061), elected officials (.04) and professionals (.012) benefit as well, although the advantages are of a much smaller magnitude. Political activists are also the only group to benefit from loose financial regulations (.006), while elites (-.067), professionals (-.047), and elected officials (-.007) all suffer.

Party structure provides a greater advantage to elected officials than other types of candidates. Party rules that limit the primaries to party loyalists and that use party registration favors elected officials (.075), and to a lesser extent professionals (.05), but results in a decline in electoral performance for elites (-.007) and activists (-.07). The use of caucuses to nominate delegates to the National Convention has a total positive effect of .1 for elected officials, while elites receive a bonus of .085 and professionals of .003, while caucuses lead to a decline in activist vote share (-.036). Alternatively, pre-primary endorsements increase the vote share of activists (.043), and provides a slight benefit to elected officials (.005), while harming professionals (-.006) and elites (-.025).

Among measurements of party behavior, control of state government by the Democrats has the greatest negative effect on those with campaign and political experience (-.243), followed by elected officials (-.157) and professionals (-.143), with elite candidates suffering the last (-.025). Activists also have the most trouble in states that are politically unified, with a total negative effect of -.1. Professionals are also hurt by unified parties (-.003), but elites (.05) and elected officials (.1) benefit.

The effect of the party institutionalization is very different in Republican primaries. Among the financial indicators of party strength, party contributions to general election

candidates provides the greatest support for elected officials (.08), with elites (.014) and activists (.003) also receiving increases in vote share and professionals performing less well (-.009), Network contributions, on the other hand, are most advantageous to elite candidates (.053), resulting in declines in vote share for all other types (elected officials -.075, activists -.036, professionals -.031). As with the Democrats, unregulated state parties assists those with campaign or political experience (.013) more than professionals (-.085), elected officials (-.133), or elites (-.137).

The use of pre-primary endorsements helps elected officials (.18), with professionals (.138), elites (.118) and activists (.015) performing less well. However, elite candidates are disproportionately benefited by restrictive primary rules (.033) and the use of caucuses (.013), while other kinds of candidates have weaker electoral performances in states with such systems. Candidates with elite backgrounds also do better in states where the party is dominant (.018), as do activists to a lesser extent (.003), while elected officials (-.034) and professionals (-.166) do less well. Finally, candidates who are self-financers, are from political families, or are celebrities have greater success in states with unified parties (.144) than professionals (.056), elected officials (.033), or activists (-.023).

The results above demonstrate that party organizational strength exerts a substantial but contingent influence on candidate success. Among Democrats, those candidates with experience in non-elected offices, have been party leaders, or who have run for office are most strongly effected by party institutionalization. More than any other type of candidate, their chances of success are helped where the party supports candidates in the general election, has a large pool of loyal donors, weak regulations of party spending and donations, and endorses candidates, while

they do less well in states with restrictive primary rules, caucuses, control of state government, and low factionalism. Caucuses have the strongest positive effect on elected officials, while elites are most helped by control of state government and party unity, and most harmed by pre-primary endorsements and unregulated party fundraising.

Party institutionalization has a far greater influence on the fortunes of well-known and wealthy candidates in the Republican Party than the Democratic Party. Party financial networks, primary rules, caucuses, control of state government, and party unity have the largest positive effect on elite candidates, while unregulated state parties has the largest negative effect on them. Elected officials derive the greatest advantage in states with active state party committees and endorsements, while suffering the most from large numbers of loyal party donors.

### Discussion

These results provide partial support for several hypotheses. First, the importance of key interest groups in the Democratic is highlighted by the greater effect that the endorsement of such groups has in Democratic than Republican primaries the strength of support from party leaders. The substantial total effect of party support on candidate vote share suggests that party organizations continue to exert a substantial influence of candidate success in the primary (the machine model), particularly as the relationship between party support and vote share is greater than most other variables. Among Democrats, the party networking model receives some support for candidates with campaign and political experience, particularly with respect to financial measures of party organizational strength. Candidates with non-elected political backgrounds are advantaged by active party committees, loyal party donors, and unregulated party finances. The candidate-centered model of congressional elections, however, is supported by positive

relationship between most measures of party organizational strength and electoral performance, as well as the ability of elected officials to take advantage of restricted primary rules. Similarly, among Republicans, elected officials are helped by pre-primary endorsements and active party committees.

The most striking difference between the two parties is the comparative role of political activists in the Democratic Party and elites in the Republican Party. Whereas indicators of party strength have very weak effects on activist candidates in the Republican Party, the same types of candidates running in Democratic primaries have either the largest positive or largest negative associations with vote share for all eight measures of party strength. In other words, the structural arrangement of the state party is of major importance for Democratic candidates with campaign/political experience, particularly when compared to similar candidates in the other party, while it has little influence on Republican candidates.

Alternatively, elite candidates are greatly advantaged by strong parties in Republican primaries, with positive coefficients for all but MONEYRULES and usually the largest magnitudes. On the other hand, Democratic elites have a mixture of advantages and disadvantages. In many respects they resemble elected officials. For most measures of party organizational strength, the direction of coefficients are quite similar for elite and elected candidates, with the exception of pre-primary endorsements.

It is important to note that the differences between the two parties are in relative, not absolute terms. For example, an elite candidate in the Democratic primary has a greater positive total effect from network contributions (.061) than a Republican (.053). So in absolute terms Democratic elites are more advantaged by a network of party donors than Republican elites.

However, this advantage disappears when compared with candidates of other types in the same party.

In general, then, greater institutionalization in the Democratic Party, particularly with regard to fundraising, leads to greater electoral success of those with long-standing ties to the party organization. Parties with substantial resources would not need self-financers and extra-party contributions to the degree that impoverished or tightly regulated parties would – a point that is underscored by the weakness of elites in both parties where the parties are well-resourced. For Democrats, those features of party strength that are closer to the voters (primary rules and caucuses) more greatly benefit elected officials, whereas those that are closer to party insiders (endorsements and fundraising) benefit those who have worked within the party structure.

The picture is very different for Republicans, however. The greater competitiveness of those candidates with high name recognition or great personal wealth in Republican primaries could be due in part to ideological reasons – i.e., that Republicans believe that effectively non-political credentials are as good or better than political ones, or out of distrust of politicians by Republican donors or voters. While party leaders, through contributions to candidates or the manipulation of endorsements, may favor elected officials, those donors who act independently of the party but are loyal to it, and the mass of activists, appear quite ready to support elite candidates.

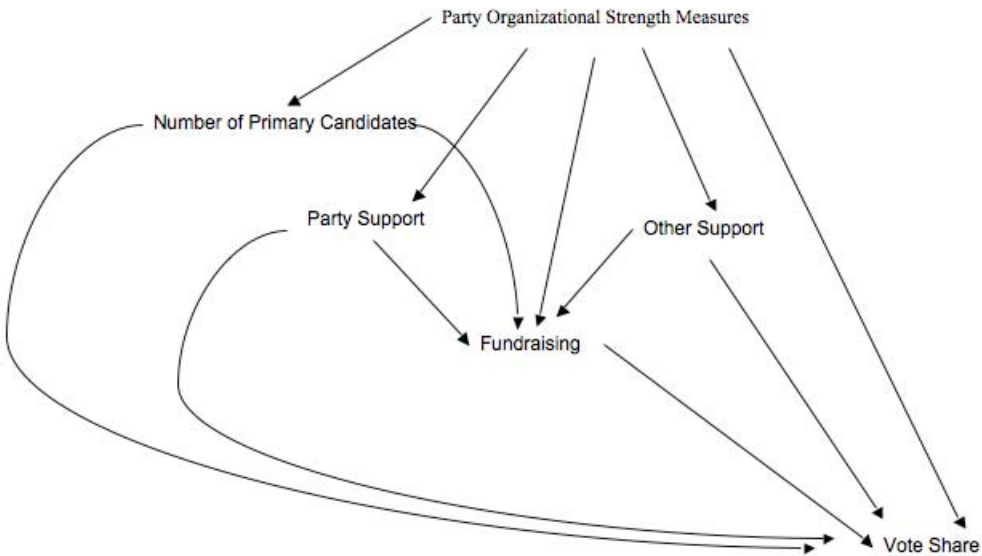


Figure 9 Simplified Path Analytic Model

Table 9.1 Total Effects of the Influences on Candidate Vote Share - Democrats

	<b>DELECT</b>	<b>DCAMPPOL</b>	<b>DELITE</b>	<b>DPROF</b>
<b>PARTYCONT</b>	0.042	0.07	0.03	0.039
<b>NETWORKCONT</b>	0.04	0.167	0.061	0.012
<b>PRIMREG</b>	0.075	-0.07	-0.007	0.05
<b>CAUCUS</b>	0.1	-0.036	0.085	0.003
<b>ENDORSE</b>	0.005	0.043	-0.021	-0.006
<b>CONTROL</b>	-0.157	-0.243	-0.025	-0.143
<b>MONEYRULES</b>	-0.007	0.006	-0.067	-0.047
<b>FACTION</b>	0.01	-0.1	0.05	-0.003
<b>ORDOTHERSUPPORT</b>	0.16	0.155	0.19	0.101
<b>ORDPARTYSUPPORT</b>	0.285	0.256	0.27	0.138
<b>NUMCAND</b>	-0.527	-0.492	-0.537	-0.579
<b>FUNDINGSHARE</b>	0.683	0.702	0.646	0.563

Table 9.2 Total Effects of the Influences on Candidate Vote Share - Republicans

	<b>RELECT</b>	<b>RCAMPPOL</b>	<b>RELITE</b>	<b>RPROF</b>
<b>PARTYCONT</b>	0.08	0.003	0.014	-0.009
<b>NETWORKCONT</b>	-0.075	-0.036	0.053	-0.031
<b>PRIMREG</b>	-0.035	-0.006	0.033	-0.064
<b>CAUCUS</b>	-0.021	-0.006	0.013	-0.03
<b>ENDORSE</b>	0.18	0.015	0.118	0.138
<b>CONTROL</b>	-0.034	0.003	0.018	-0.166
<b>MONEYRULES</b>	-0.133	0.013	-0.137	-0.085
<b>FACTION</b>	0.033	-0.023	0.144	0.056
<b>ORDOTHERSUPPORT</b>	0.132	0.09	0.058	0.133
<b>ORDPARTYSUPPORT</b>	0.277	0.23	0.217	0.212
<b>NUMCAND</b>	-0.547	-0.56	-0.536	-0.513
<b>FUNDINGSHARE</b>	0.664	0.644	0.537	0.644

DELECT: Democratic candidate who has been elected to office

DCAMPPOL: Democratic candidate with campaign or non-elected political experience

DELITE: Democratic candidate who is a self-financer, celebrity, or from a political family

DPROF: Democratic candidate with a professional background

RELECT: Republican candidate who has been elected to office

RCAMPPOL: Republican candidate with campaign or non-elected political experience

RELITE: Republican candidate who is a self-financer, celebrity, or from a political family

RPROF: Republican candidate with a professional background

PARTYCONT: Average state committee donations to federal candidates

NETWORKCONT: Average contributions to state candidates by donors weighted by party loyalty

PRIMREG: Combination of restrictiveness of primary rules and use of party registration

CAUCUS: Use of presidential nominating caucus

ENDORSE: Use of pre-primary endorsements

CONTROL: Share of control of state government

MONEYRULES: Degree of regulation of state party finances

FACTION: Average share of the vote of gubernatorial primary winner

ORDOTHERSUPPORT: Support, neutrality, or opposition from non-party organizations

ORDPARTYSUPPORT: Support, neutrality, or opposition from the party

NUMCAND: Number of primary candidates

FUNDINGSHARE: Candidate's proportion of all primary funds raised

## **CHAPTER TEN:**

### **CONCLUSION**

In the Introduction I posed two related questions: 1) Does party organizational structure influence congressional primary results; and 2) Does this influence have a differential effect on candidates of various backgrounds? The degree to which the answer to the first question is in the affirmative enhances the importance of the second question. If party organizational structures of various types facilitate certain types of candidacies, in particular the candidacies of those who possess unequal shares of name recognition and personal wealth, then the process of electoral competition could be subjected to serious criticism from the perspective of democratic theory.

Over the last several decades, the traditional model of party machines controlled by local power brokers has been replaced by one in which candidates campaign autonomously with personal organizations. At the same time, there is evidence that party organizations, particularly at the national level, have become increasingly professionalized, possessed of unprecedented resources and with an active role in candidate recruitment and support as well as voter mobilization. In the course of this dissertation I have attempted to delineate the degree to which party organizations hew to these disparate models. More importantly, I have examined the *consequences* of party organizational structure on candidates for the U.S. House.

I have examined several distinct models of party organizations. These can be grouped into two basic categories: entrepreneurial parties, with distinct organizational identities and rich

internal structures, and the entrepreneurial model, where the party organizations are relatively weak and are dominated by elected officials and other political interests. Institutional parties are divided into two different kinds, based on the degree of central control: the traditional machine model (with a centrally controlled leadership), and the networking model, where the central leadership is weak but the organization itself remains vibrant. The distinction between the machine and networking models can be best understood by the difference between parties behaving as self-interested actors and parties functioning as rules-bearing institutions that shape the pattern of political competition.

According to Duverger (1957) and Panebianco (1988), caucus-cadre parties are more likely to nominate celebrities, elites, and the wealthy than are institutional parties. Conversely, institutional parties should be more likely to nominate candidates with explicitly political credentials. Furthermore, I expected machine-based parties with active central leaderships to be more likely to support elected officials, whereas more decentralized parties would more strongly favor candidates with non-elected experience. To test this argument, I presented the following hypotheses in the Introduction:

Hypothesis 1: Hypothesis 1: Fewer candidates emerge in congressional races where stronger party organizations are present.

Hypothesis 2: Stronger party organizations will increase the likelihood of the entry of a candidate with experience in elected office.

Hypothesis 3: Parties intervene in congressional primaries in support of candidates, and are more likely to support candidates with experience in elected office than other candidates.

Hypothesis 4: Experience in elected office and support from party organizations will increase a candidate's campaign fundraising.

Hypothesis 5: Experience in elected office and support from party organizations will increase a candidate's share of the primary vote.

Hypothesis 6: The indirect and direct effects of party organizational strength on primary vote share are greater for candidates with elective and political experience than for candidates with elite backgrounds.

The process of testing the hypotheses is significantly complicated by the analysis in Chapter 3, which suggested a number of flaws in the Cotter et al. measure of party organizational strength. The evidence suggests that there is likely no one measure of party organizational strength. As opposed to the work of Cotter, Gibson, Huckshorn & Bibby, I find little support for the idea that there is a single metric of organizational capacity. Not only are there serious methodological concerns with the Cotter et al. measure, but a comparison of survey results with public reporting indicates little relationship between what state party chair and executive directors have said they do and what they have actually done. In addition, alternative measures of party organizational strength correlate very weakly with the Cotter et al. measure, and do not factor with one another either. Rather than a unitary conception of party organizational strength, there are at best broad categories of institutional capacity, related to fundraising, political cohesion, and the legal and administrative structure of the party.

Rather than testing the effects of one indicator of party strength, I employed eight distinct measures to measure party institutionalization: the use of caucuses for presidential nominating contests, restrictive primary rules and party registration, pre-primary endorsements, control of

state government, party factionalism, regulation of party finances by state law, the financial activity of party committees in federal general elections, and the extent to which a state possessed a pool of loyal party donors. For the sake of simplicity, I assumed that these variables were measures of party institutionalization, with positive ratings indicating a party more closely resembling a mass-membership organization. While party support is used as an indicator of the support by the central party leadership (the machine model), party-as-structure can indicate either form of institutional organization.

Hypothesis 1 directly examines the division between the machine and networking models of party organization. Under the machine model, party organizational strength is expected to be negatively related to the number of primary candidates, while the reverse is true under the networking model. The results indicate that state parties with greater financial resources encourage the participation of more candidates, while pre-primary endorsements function as machine institutions that reduce the number of candidates. Control of state government exhibited different results based on political party, with the Democrats having more candidates and Republicans fewer.

Hypothesis 2 addresses the degree to which elected officials are encouraged to run for office by the presence of strong party organizations, a test of the machine model. The analysis in Chapter 6 indicates that party organization exhibits only a limited capacity to encourage candidates with previous experience in elected office to run for the House, with expected chance for victory playing a far greater role.

In Chapter 7 I tested two different hypotheses related to the campaign – organizational support and candidate fundraising. Hypothesis 3 was largely supported (providing evidence for

the machine model), with party leaders intervening in congressional primary contests with some frequency, and more often in support of elected officials. The other two models (networking and entrepreneurial) received some support, as self-financing and having campaign and political experience were positively and significantly related to party support. However, celebrity status and membership in a political family are unrelated to party support, indicating a degree of institutional autonomy consistent with the arguments of Duverger and Panebianco. With respect to Hypothesis 4, elected officials were, as predicted, better able to raise money, and in most cases (except for Democrats in open seats) party support resulted in an increase in funds raised. However, self-financed candidates, celebrities, and those from political families were also able to raise larger sums. Party as structures had an inconsistent effect on fundraising.

I employed two different methods to test the effects of party organization and candidate characteristics on electoral outcomes. In Chapter 8, I used a regression analysis to test Hypothesis 5, that party support and experience in elected office are positively related to vote share. The hypothesis was supported, and the results were relatively robust. In the subsequent chapter, I used a path analysis to address Hypothesis 6. While the explanatory power of the model was weak, the results were intriguing. As with the previous analysis, support from party leaders has a substantial total effect (direct and indirect) on vote share. While stronger party institutions tended to favor elected officials and those with campaign and political experience in Democratic primaries, elite candidates were strongly advantaged in Republican primaries. The results suggested that the Democrats display the characteristics of both machine and networking, both of which are institutional parties. This result points to a possible internal tension between the central leadership and key constituencies. The Republicans, on the other hand, appear to more closely resemble an entrepreneurial party, in which greater institutionalization, rather than

reducing the role of elites, tends to enhance it. Again, I must underscore the suggestive nature of these results, as the models employed failed to reach the level of statistical significance.

A number of other conclusions can be drawn from the results. First, there is substantial evidence to support the idea that party leaders attempt to shape congressional primaries. Because party organizations nearly always support incumbents for re-nomination, party organizations, the success of incumbents in being re-nominated may be in part due to institutional support, rather than straightforward incumbent advantage (which has been in any case notoriously difficult to calculate). Any belief that party leaders remain neutral in intra-party contests is also cast into doubt by the fact that party organizations are perceived to be backing a specific candidate in a fifth of all open seat primaries. This level of involvement is greater than intervention by key party constituencies, which traditionally have been viewed as major players in intra-party primary elections. While it is unclear in the data collected from CQ as to the extent to which party support is a product of endorsements by elected officials or implicit or explicit backing by the non-elected party organizations, the results presented in this dissertation do suggest that parties are by no means passive observers.

Second, even when controlling for exogenous factors like electoral success, party rules, and political context, there remains a substantial difference in the internal dynamics of the two political parties. The process of candidate emergence is quite different in Democratic and Republican primaries, with factors frequently exhibiting divergent influences on the entry, fundraising, organizational support, and electoral performance of the various classes of candidates. While the results of this analysis are inconclusive, the results suggest distinct organizational cultures in each of the two parties. These differences appear to be reflective of the

underlying ideological character of the two parties, with a more liberal, egalitarian structure in the Democratic Party and a more traditional social hierarchy in the Republican Party.

In sum, the results of the study suggest answers to the questions posed at the beginning. Parties have some effect on competition in congressional primaries. Although other factors play a more important role (particularly the underlying nature of the district and the presence or absence of an incumbent), the support of the party leadership can play an incremental but crucial role in the success or failure of a candidate. When observed as an independent actor, party organizations continue to play an important role, a role that favors those who have served the party in elective office or other capacities. When viewed as a structure, the role of party is more ambiguous, in part because there is no one metric of “strength.” There is some indication that highly institutionalized Democratic parties resemble the mass-membership parties of Europe, while the Republican Party, despite its more professionalized reputation, is a more candidate-centered organization that is open to exploitation by social elites.

These conclusions should not be over-interpreted. The statistical significance of the influence of party organizational structure on candidate success is modest. Expanding the study would prove quite difficult, since Congressional Quarterly discontinued its candidate survey after 1998. One avenue of exploration would be a comparison with the Senate, where information about the backgrounds of candidates might be easier to obtain over a longer span of time. However, the long terms of Senators and smaller size of the body would likely create similar statistical problems. In addition, the Senate appears to be a much more elite institution and is probably too far up the political ladder to be a useful test of candidate viability and party organizational strength.

A more fruitful area of inquiry might lie in state legislatures. With short terms and a large number of states, a sufficient sample size could be generated focusing on a single year. More importantly, state legislative contests might be a better indicator of the party-candidate matrix. In many cases, election to the U.S. House represents the pinnacle of political success for ambitious office-seekers. Congressional elections might fail to capture critical influences of political success. State legislatures, on the other hand, are major stepping stones for those seeking higher office. Many politicians begin their careers as members of State Assemblies or State Senates, and membership in these bodies gives a huge advantage in contests for higher office. An effort to understand the process of winning viability, and the role that party structures play in that process, might be better conducted in the state houses rather than in Washington.

This study limits its analysis to the years 1980 to 1998, principally due to restrictions on the availability of data. However, over recent years there have been important innovations in the techniques of congressional campaigning. The main change has been the development of internet-based fundraising and political organizing. It is likely that the new technologies may fundamentally alter the older pattern of congressional competition, with important consequences for the fate of congressional candidates. Future research should certainly take these developments into account.

Nevertheless, there are clear indications that party organizations continue to have relevance in American politics. With the apparent decline in competitiveness in general elections, a greater understanding of the internal processes of the two political parties, and the differences between them, is crucial for an understanding of what candidates ultimately win public office. Party organizations have a significant effect on candidate viability, both directly

(through the actions of party leaders), and indirectly (by structuring competition). Furthermore, the tendencies of party organizations to support candidates with differing qualifications could have a profound effect on who ultimately holds political power.

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