

Understanding Candidate Supply: The Role of Training Programs in Politics

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Abstract

While the literature on candidate emergence has made great strides in understanding the factors that hinder office-seeking behavior, especially as it pertains to women and minorities, the reasons why individuals decide to run for office are less clear. One factor that has been considered as playing an important role in the candidacy of women in particular, are political organizations that take on a recruitment and training role. In this project, I use original data from the Michigan Political Leadership Program (MPLP) that encompasses the total applicant pool of the program from 2003 to 2015. The nature of the data provides leverage to examine the electoral trajectory of individuals who were accepted to the program and those who were not. Demographically, the MPLP pool of minority applicants exceeds the expected percentage given the representation of these groups at the state level. I find that individuals who were accepted to the program were more likely to run for office. This suggests that being accepted into a training program, and subsequently completing it, is an important and under explored factor in office seeking behavior.

Introduction

One question of interest in the identity politics literature is whether descriptive representation matters for American Politics.¹ Beyond the normative arguments in favor of descriptive representation as a means of improving deliberative democracy (Mansbridge, 1999), there is evidence both at the state and national level that the presence of minority and women legislators does have an impact on political outcomes. In particular, minority legislators are more likely to sponsor and support legislation that speak to the interests of minority constituencies (Canon, 1999; Whitby, 2000; Hero and Preuhs, 2010; Juenke and Preuhs, 2012). Similarly, women legislators are more likely to initiate legislative action on women's issues (Bratton and Haynie, 1999) and prioritize gendered issues in their legislative agenda (Thomas and Welch, 1991; Swers, 2005). Although it can be argued that minority and women legislators are uniquely responsive to the needs of women and minority constituencies, the reality is that these groups are still underrepresented in American politics.

The fact that women and minority legislators can influence policy outcomes suggests that they can access the ranks of elected officials, but there is still a candidate supply problem. Women and minority candidates are less likely to run for office. That is, prior work on the electoral success of women indicates that they are just as likely to win as men (Fox and Carroll, 2006), but the patterns of women's electoral success varies across states (Sanbonmatsu, 2010; Wilcox and Norrander, 2005). Similarly, there is evidence that minority candidates can and do win in non-majority minority districts (Highton, 2004; Juenke, 2014; Shah, 2014), but electoral success is conditioned by the presence of minority candidates willing to run

¹Descriptive representation is achieved when a constituency is represented by someone who shares their identity (Pitkin, 1967).

for office (Juenke and Shah, 2016, 2015) and majority minority districts remain the main venue by which minority officeholders reach elected office (Shah, Scott and Gonzalez Juenke, 2018). All together, this suggests that there is still much to be learned about the paths to elected office for both current and potential officeholders. If demand side theories cannot explain the representation of women and minorities in state legislatures, then we must learn more about how ambitious women and minorities become candidates.

In the classic book, *Why Parties?*, Aldrich 1995 argues that one of the fundamental purposes of parties is to serve as gatekeepers in order to provide a check on political ambition and regulate access to political office. The gender and politics literature, in particular, suggests that this check on political ambition has been detrimental to whose candidacy gets supported and who gets asked to run (Niven, 1998; Sanbonmatsu, 2006). Furthermore, the strength of the recruitment effort for diverse candidates depends on the message (Karpowitz, Monson and Preece, 2017) as well as the means through which party leaders choose to recruit (Crowder-Meyer, 2013). With that being said, the party does not appear to be the main means through which diverse candidates are being recruited and encouraged to run for office. In fact, it can be argued that both, on the political right and left, independent political and activist groups are stepping into the role of determining who runs for office and are reducing the parties' ability to gatekeep (Rauch and Raja, 2017). These organizations are not only identifying talented individuals, but gaining access to those whom the party may have traditionally missed or may not have the networks to recruit.

In this study, I argue that candidate and leadership training programs, are a mechanism for identifying potential candidates. Program participants present a clear example of nascent ambition (Fox and Lawless, 2005) precisely because applicants are expressing initial interest

in running for office or, at a minimum, interest in being politically engaged. To this end, I focus specifically on the Michigan Political Leadership Program to develop an original dataset of applicant information spanning from 2003 to 2015. I further expand on the data contained in the application files by including a measure of whether or not an applicant ran for office. This presents a unique opportunity to not only examine political ambition expression across race and gender, but also to focus on the shift from nascent political ambition to ambition expression (e.g. running for office). Using coarsened exact matching, I show how program participation plays a distinct role in candidate's decision to run for office and their subsequent electoral outcomes.

Who Runs For Office

Voter preferences (demand) for minority and women candidates are often presented as a factor to explain the representation of these groups in office. Indeed a candidate might take these preferences into account, but the demand side story does not fully account for the emergence and electoral success of women and minority candidates. While there is evidence that voters prefer representatives from their own racial group (Canon, 1999; Hutchings and Valentino, 2004), demand for a representative of a specific race does not hinder candidate's electoral chances (Citrin, Green and Sears, 1990; Highton, 2004; Voss and Lublin, 2001). Similarly, there is evidence that both men and women prefer a greater proportion of men to women as representatives (Dolan and Sanbonmatsu, 2009). Nevertheless, co-partisanship over rides gender and racial preferences for representation (Kam, 2007; Sigelman et al., 1995; Dolan and Lynch, 2015). This provides some indication that demand alone is not dictating

when women and minority candidates decide to seek political office.

In the candidate emergence literature, scholars have grappled with the questions of who runs for office, why and how this matters for democratic outcomes (Fowler, 2010). The most recent research has moved toward looking at individuals in the pre-candidacy stage to better answer these questions. More specifically, this stream of literature not only seeks to understand the process of recruitment, but also the motivational and rational considerations that factor into office seekers' decision making (Moncrief, 1999; Fox and Lawless, 2004; Kanthak and Woon, 2015; Crowder-Meyer, 2013). While this literature has made great strides in understanding the factors that hinder office seeking behavior, especially as it pertains to women and minorities, the reasons why individuals decide to run for office are less clear (Dolan, 2006).

What is relatively well defined in the literature are the assumptions about who runs for office - the traditional candidacy pool. The accepted view is that candidates (both men and women) are likely to be lawyers, businessmen or women, educators and political activists (Moncrief, Squire and Jewell, 2001; Fox and Lawless, 2004), which is largely based on the observed winners of electoral races, members of the legislature. What's more, this assumption about who runs for office underlies many of our findings in the candidate emergence literature. However, there is reason to believe that the candidate pool has expanded, particularly for women. In a qualitative study, Carroll and Sanbonmatsu (2013) find that the common experience among the interviewed female legislators is strong community involvement and civic engagement. In addition, the study conducted by Sanbonmatsu, Carroll and Walsh (2009) implies that women do not necessarily follow the same career paths as men on the road to political candidacy. The literature is not so clearly defined as to paths to political

office for minority officeholders, although see (Reny and Shah, 2018; Shah, 2015). Inherently, there is a selection bias problem. We tend to know a lot about the winners, but not very much about the losers (see Juenke, 2014).

Similarly, the literature has made inroads in identifying latent candidates or candidates with nascent ambition (Fox and Lawless, 2004, 2005), but much of what we know about candidate emergence derives from the observed cases of individuals running for office. Scholars still do not fully understand the individual level factors, that contribute to latent candidates emerging. More simply, we have not fully examined all the factors that might explain why candidates get elected in the places that they do (Broockman, 2014). A related concern is that the desire to run for office may not translate to actual outcomes because of the costs involved in running for office, both personal and monetary (Dittmar, 2015; Shames, 2017; Sanbonmatsu, 2015; Jenkins, 2007). In addition to the ways in which parties can act as gatekeepers (Broockman et al., 2014; Sanbonmatsu, 2006) to keep particular individuals out of office, political ambition can be dynamic (Fox and Lawless, 2011). The implication of this is that individuals may be willing to express interest in running for office, but may never take the actual steps to run. This is a problem for the literature if its goal is to answer why and when people, particularly women, decide to run for office. All together, this would suggest that rethinking the candidacy pool is necessary to better understand who runs. I turn to political training programs as means of identifying latent candidates.

Redefining the Candidacy Pool

One factor that has played an important, but understudied role, in political candidacy is the political training program. As it pertains to women, these organizations have been instrumental in advancing women's political ambition by undertaking recruitment, training and developing resources for candidates (Burrell, 2010). The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) names over 400 training programs across 38 states.² A number of these programs cater specifically to women as well as other minority groups, but many of these programs facilitate the political ambition of both men and women across racial groups.

Despite the proliferation of these programs, we are still learning about the outcomes of these organizations, as it pertains to training and recruitment, as well as how they matter for the candidacy of disadvantaged groups in the political realm. Furthermore, there is little research about the individuals who complete these programs and if they fit the traditional conception of the candidacy pool, although (Kreitzer and Osborn, 2018, see). However, there is limited evidence that women are more likely to have attended a training program (Sanbonmatsu, Carroll and Walsh, 2009), and some evidence that training programs act as a source of information and skill development (Sanbonmatsu, 2015).

Given the growth in the number of candidate training programs over time, it is somewhat surprising that the literature remains relatively silent on what these programs mean for legislative politics and representation in the United States. However, of note are the works by Hennings (2011) and Stock (2012) as they both examine how training programs influence the behavior of its participants. I differentiate this current work from Henning and Stock

²<http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/education/leadership-resources>

by examining the step prior to program participation - the application process. In focusing on program applicants, I am able to address why these programs matter for identifying candidates as well as for the electoral process in state and local politics in Michigan through an in - depth analysis of the Michigan Political Leadership Program (MPLP). I seek to situate programs like MPLP into the candidate emergence literature by examining if MPLP applicants are latent candidates.

There are a number of ways in which an individual can be engaged in the American political system. Although running for and serving in office are not the typical acts of political engagement that one might think of, I contend that they are acts of political participation nonetheless. Because the political participation literature provides a framework to understand why people decide to participate in political activities, I draw on this literature. In particular, I look to the seminal work of Verba, Scholzman and Brady 1995. Verba, Scholzman and Brady's framework suggests that people who are active in political activities are those who have resources(time, money, and civic skills), motivation (political interest, information and efficacy). According to the third prong of the Verba et. al framework, these politically active individuals just need to be recruited or encouraged to participate. The Verba et. al participation model fits nicely here as it provides a means of theorizing what benefits training programs can have for its participants. Candidate-training programs can serve in the capacity of encouraging potential candidates to run (Hennings, 2011) as well as of identifying potential candidates for office and providing these individuals with resources (Sanbonmatsu, 2015; Burrell, 2010). I take these prior arguments a step further by examining actual electoral outcomes as a result of program participation.

Assuming that political training programs account for all three aspects necessary to

spur political participation, individuals who seek to complete, and do complete, a training program will be motivated, have the capacity, and have been encouraged to participate. It would follow that the expectation would be that those individuals who actually participate in the program would be more likely to engage in office seeking behavior. Thus, I hypothesize that training program participants will be more likely to run for office than non-participants and being accepted into MPLP will be a greater predictor of running for office than the mere desire to run. In addition, conditional on being accepted into the program, participants with civic skills will be more likely to run for office.

Data

In order to test the aforementioned hypotheses, I create an original dataset that consists of applicants to the Michigan Political Leadership Program. To provide some background about the program, the Michigan Political Leadership Program (MPLP) was established in 1992. MPLP is a non-partisan program that emphasizes partisan and geographic parity in each class. Each year, the program chooses 12 men and 12 women through an application and interview process. The application and interview process are important features of the program because not every political training program has a gatekeeping function. That is, some political training programs are open to all who pay to attend a training. If accepted in the program, participants, or fellows as described by the MPLP program, are required to attend one weekend session per month for about a year. In total, the fellows attend 10 training sessions, which cover topics like public policy issues across the state, public speaking, campaign planning, and leadership development. The program is explicitly advertised as a

space for individuals interested in running for office and participating in the political process.

The dataset includes information about each applicant from two time points - at the point in which they apply to the program and any electoral or appointed political activity after the application process. Data from the first time point was obtained from individual application files from 2003 to 2015. The MPLP application files contain information about prior political office and other political experience, beliefs about important issues in Michigan, organizations that the applicant participates in, demographic information (gender, race, education, and occupation), and social ties (each applicant has to provide 2 reference letters). Each file also contains an aggregate interview score. At the interview, each applicant is given scores from a panel consisting of the program directors and former program participants. The interview score is a unique feature of this dataset and is a rating of an individual's likelihood of running for office and program fit. In addition, applicants are specifically asked their expected outcomes for participating in the program and whether or not they plan on running for office. Data from the second time point includes a measure of whether or not a program applicant ran for office or was appointed to a position, the year, and if the office seeking attempt was successful.

The data collected here is unique because it includes self-report data on demographic characteristics, activities and desire to run for office as well as observed office seeking attempts. In essence, I am able to capture applicant quality before they complete (or do not complete) the program. Furthermore, the dataset includes all applicants to the program. I not only can track outcomes for individuals who have participated in the program, but also the outcomes for individuals who were not selected. The nature of the data provides leverage in examining latent candidacy across applicants over time as well as the impact of program

participation. Descriptive statistics for the dataset are provided in Table 2.1. From 2003 to 2015, 542 individuals have identified as white (69.8% of applicants), 177 individuals have identified as Black (22.8% of the applicants), 15 individuals have identified as Latino (1.9% of applicants), 15 have identified as Asian (1.9% of applicants), 15 have identified as other (1.9%), 5 have identified as Arab American and 7 have identified as Native American (both less than 1% respectively). Table 1 also shows that there are no stark differences in the racial demographics of individuals who were accepted in the program and those who were not. In fact, the racial demographics of all program applicants is about on par with Census data for Michigan - also depicted in the table.

Table 1: **Comparison of MPLP Racial Breakdown to Michigan Census Data**

Racial Group (Percentages)	Census Data for Michigan		MPLP Racial Demographics	
	<i>V. 2015 (Estimated)</i>	<i>V. 2010 (Actual)</i>	<i>Accepted</i>	<i>Not Accepted</i>
White	75.6	76.6	71.81	68.61
Black or African American	14.2	14.2	21.14	23.85
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.7	0.6	0.67	1.07
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.0	2.4	2.34	1.67
Latino	4.9	4.4	2.01	1.88
Arab American *			0.67	0.63
Other			1.34	2.30

*I include Arab American as a racial category here because in Michigan it is a salient identity. The largest Arab American population in the United States resides in Michigan.

While the demographic profiles of MPLP applicants do not present real differences from other members of the public, there are some strong differences in racial and gender demographics between MPLP applicants and the composition of the Michigan legislature as

depicted in Figure 1.³ In comparing the composition of the Michigan Legislature to MPLP applicants, there is certainly more representation of minority groups and women among the MPLP applicants. Although this is a descriptive representation of the data, Figure 1 speaks to what scholars are missing when only drawing inferences about candidate emergence from officeholders. Furthermore, the fact that there is greater representation of minority groups in the MPLP applicant pool is encouraging and speaks to the evidence from (Lawless, 2012) about the political ambition of minority groups, Blacks in particular.

Although the process of completing a political training program is certainly meaningful, the process of applying to one of these program provides some suggestion that an individual is interested in politics - motivated to some degree. I show this descriptively with the MPLP participant sample in Figure 2. Program applicants show interest in running for office across racial groups. More specifically, over 50% of applicants across groups say that they want to run when asked on MPLP application materials. The same can be said across genders. Both men and women suggest that they are interested in running for office more often than not. This suggests that not only do applicants understand the purpose of the program, but also are seeking the program to accomplish the outcome of running for office. This further suggests that political training programs may be used as a means to identify potential candidates for office.

Moving forward, I assume that the process of applying to a political training program accounts for at least one aspect of motivation to participate - political interest. Previous work has similarly examined political training outcomes for participants in comparison to

³This comparison is based on demographic characteristics of the 2015 Michigan Legislature according to the National Conference of State Legislatures

Figure 1: Gender and Racial Composition of MPLP Applicant Pool

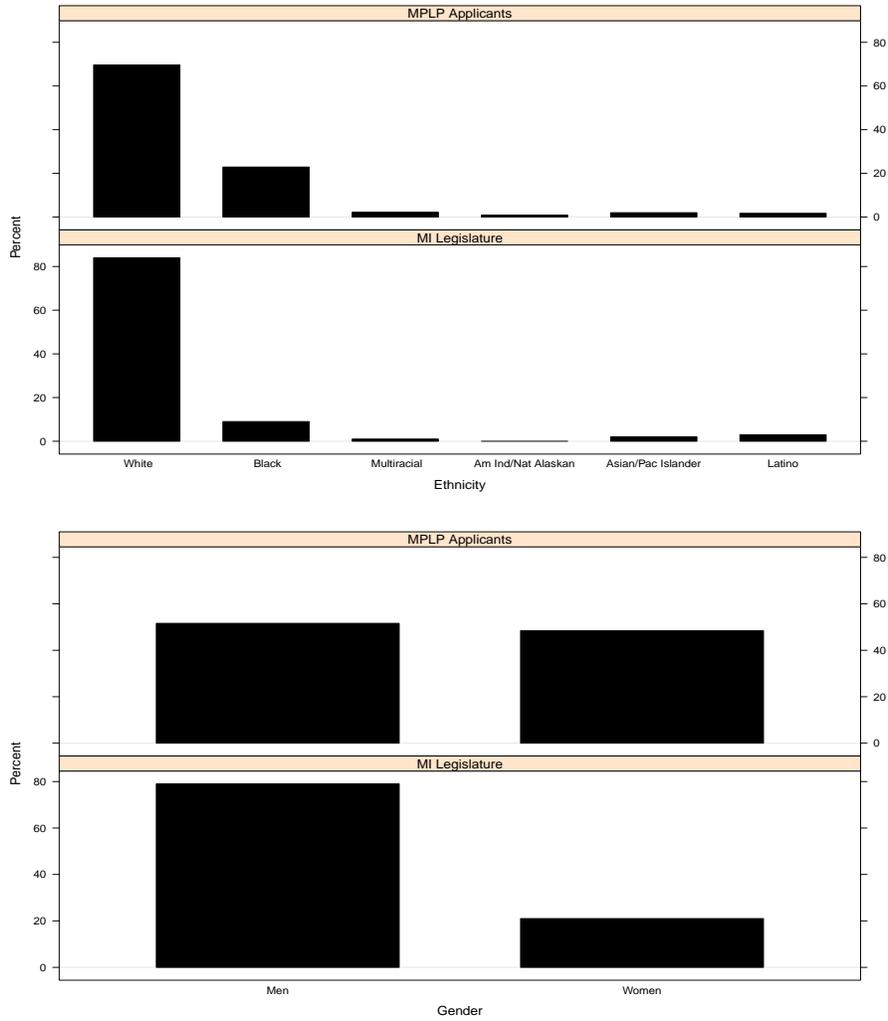
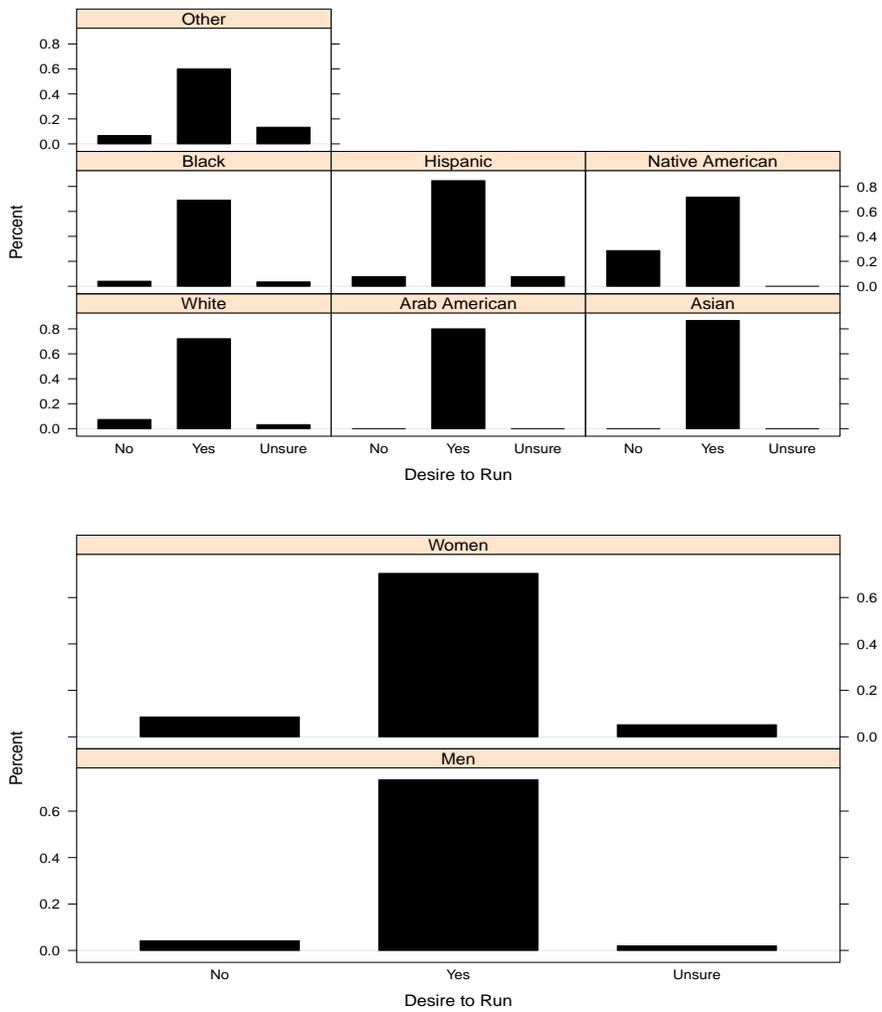


Figure 2: Desire to Run for Office Across Racial Groups



non-participants and suggests that political training program participants are more likely to have knowledge about politics and methods of political participation as well as feel that they can run for office (Stock, 2012). This would suggest that political training programs influence levels of information and political efficacy, but an individual must first be interested in running for office to glean those benefits.

Empirical Analysis

I turn to the empirical analysis to examine the relationship between program acceptance and indicators associated with political participation (motivation, capacity and encouragement) in Table 2. In analyzing the data, I use a matching approach.⁴ In particular, I want to reduce any potential bias or variance that may simply be a product of the sample (Ho et al., 2007), especially given my interest in examining outcomes for women and minorities. Specifically, I use coarsened exact matching because of the straightforward nature of the approach and the evidence in favor of this method reducing imbalance in the data (Iacus, King and Porro, 2012).

I match applicants on gender, race, education, and the applicants' aggregate interview score. Matching on the interview score is particularly important because applicants with the highest interview score are not necessarily admitted into the program. MPLP emphasizes balance on factors like gender, partisanship, race and geography. Time and commitment as well as the rule against running while in the program, are also considered in the decision to accept an applicant. This means that an individual with a stellar application and high

⁴I provide a discussion of the matched sample and balance statistics in the Appendix as Table ?? and Table ??.

interview score might not be admitted. The person admitted might have a low or midrange interview score and average recommendations. The advantage that the less than stellar candidate has might be location or partisanship. The program seeks to have applicants from all over the state and requires gender as well as partisan parity. In addition, this focus on balance means that training and encouragement might matter even more in this context. MPLP is not accepting the participants who will necessarily win an electoral contest, but the ones who fit their balance criteria.

The dependent variable, or the “treatment”, in the matching model is program acceptance. That is, I am mitigating the differences between accepted applicants and non-accepted applicants to make a causal claim about participation in MPLP. I first present results using all of the observations in the dataset and then presents results on the matched subset of the data. While using the full sample will allow for more generalizable claims about what the presence of a training program means for representative outcomes in the Michigan context, using the matched subset of the data will allow for a quasi-causal test of whether participation in MPLP matters or provides its participants with some set of skills that makes them more likely to seek office.

I next use logistic regression to model the likelihood of running for office. The baseline model for both the unmatched and matched data (shown in Table 2.2 as Model 1 and 2 respectively) include the interview score, race,⁵ gender, education, age, and desire to run for office.⁶ The baseline models account for how demographic characteristics and sheer political

⁵I dichotomized race to include all persons of color as 1 and whites as the comparison case. A model with race including categories for Whites, Blacks, Asians, Latinos, Native Americans, and Others is included in the Appendix as Table A.5. I chose to use a dichotomous measure here to maintain a reasonable sample size in the matched sample. Additionally, the racial group differences in running for office, in comparison to whites, remain non-significant.

⁶Desire to run for office is dichotomized here and in subsequent models

Table 2: The Impact of Political Training Programs on Running for Office

	<i>Dependent variable: Ran for Office</i>			
	Unmatched (1)	Matched (2)	Unmatched (3)	Matched (4)
Accepted	1.000*** (0.218)	1.047*** (0.226)	1.214*** (0.318)	1.451*** (0.346)
Prior Office			1.695*** (0.294)	1.790*** (0.321)
College	0.378 (0.212)	0.420 (0.224)	0.371 (0.234)	0.364 (0.250)
Higher Degree	-0.362 (0.301)	-0.431 (0.335)	-0.236 (0.328)	-0.369 (0.370)
POC	-0.296 (0.214)	-0.272 (0.239)	-0.127 (0.235)	-0.134 (0.265)
Involved in Community Group			-0.499 (0.347)	-0.639 (0.386)
Involved with Party			0.900*** (0.274)	0.970*** (0.294)
Female	-0.181 (0.196)	-0.100 (0.212)	-0.059 (0.218)	0.032 (0.238)
Interview Score	0.007 (0.005)	0.004 (0.006)	0.006 (0.005)	0.0001 (0.007)
Desire to Run	0.582 (0.323)	0.691** (0.347)	0.888** (0.403)	1.057** (0.444)
Age	0.044*** (0.009)	0.046*** (0.009)	0.032*** (0.010)	0.034*** (0.011)
Year Fixed Effects			✓	✓
Constant	-4.041*** (0.646)	-3.981*** (0.767)	-4.314*** (0.795)	-4.411*** (0.955)
Observations	586	501	586	501
Log Likelihood	-324.701	-285.402	-285.696	-247.287
Akaike Inf. Crit.	667.403	588.804	619.392	542.573

Note:

p<0.05; *p<0.01

interest might influence the decision to run for office given that the literature suggests that some groups are more likely to express political ambition than others (Lawless and Fox, 2005). In the case of the baseline model for the unmatched data, the significant indicators for the observed behavior of running for office are age and being accepted into the program. Gender, race, education, interview score, and desire to run for office are not significant here. For the matched model, age and being accepted into the program is also significant. The matched model differs from the unmatched model in that the desire to run for office is significant.

Given that there is some evidence for MPLP providing its participants with motivation to run for office, I now turn to Models 3 and 4 to assess capacity and encouragement in the context of the full model. Models 3 and 4 include the baseline variables along with an indicator for having previously served in office, political party involvement, community group involvement, and time fixed effects.⁷ The inclusion of the prior office variable gets at the impact that having previously served in office has on the decision to run. This is especially pertinent given that candidates are more likely to enter an electoral race when they perceive they are likely to win (Maisel and Stone, 1997). Including that variable in the model with program acceptance might speak to the effect that political training program participation is actually having on encouraging participants to run. To account for capacity, I include dichotomous measures of political party involvement and community group involvement. Party involvement and community group involvement fall into classic definitions of civic engagement. Verba et. al Verba et al. (1995) suggest that it is through this type of

⁷The fixed effects are not substantively interesting for this analysis, but are included because the political climate in a given year may encourage or discourage potential candidates to run for office. In Table 2, fixed effects are denoted with a checkmark. The full results, with fixed effects denoted in the table, are available in the Appendix as Table 9

participation that individuals gain civic skills.

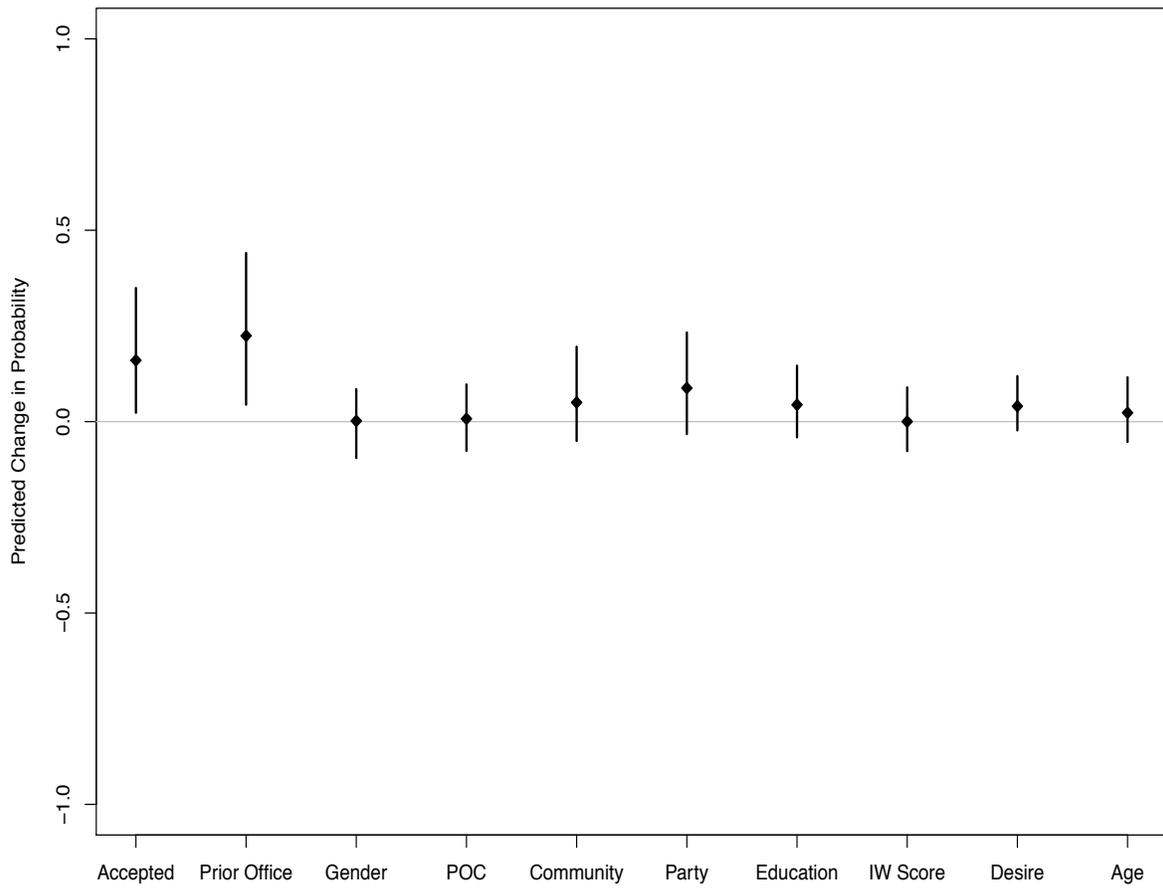
The significance and direction of the coefficients in model 3 and 4 are consistent despite the use of matching.⁸ Once again, being accepted into the MPLP program is a positive predictor of running for office as desire to run for office. Education, race, interview score, and gender remain non-significant predictors of whether an applicant runs for office. This seems to indicate that perceptions of likelihood to run and assessment of program fit in the interview process is not a good indicator of who actually runs. In terms of capacity, community group involvement is negatively related to running for office, but is not significant in either of the models. Party involvement, on the other hand, is positively related to running for office and is significant in both models. This makes sense given the discussion of the role of the party in the state politics literature. Although that discussion largely relates to how the party can make or break the candidacy of women (Sanbonmatsu, 2010; Niven, 1998; Carroll and Sanbonmatsu, 2013), being in the party network appears to be an important factor in office seeking behavior (Crowder-Meyer, 2013; Karpowitz, Monson and Preece, 2017; Preece, Stoddard and Fisher, 2016). This indicates that all of forms of civic engagement are not created equal in encouraging candidate emergence.

I turn to the predicted probabilities from the matched model (model 4) to further tease out the effects of the significant variables on running for office. In particular, I examine the discrete change in predicted probabilities in Figure 3.⁹ When considering the effect of

⁸The likelihood ratio test for the baseline models in comparison to the full models (both matched and unmatched respectively) suggest that the additional variables significantly contribute to the model.

⁹The variables for being accepted in the program, prior office, desire to run, race, gender, education, being involved in the community and being involved in the party are categorical variables. Thus, I estimate the discrete change in the predicted probabilities when each of these variables take on the value of 0 and 1, respectively. The variables for interview score and age of applicants are continuous. Thus, I estimate the discrete change for a centered standard deviation increase (plus and minus one-half standard deviation around the median).

Figure 3: Discrete Change in Predicted Probabilities



participation in MPLP, there is a significant difference in the probability of running for office between accepted and non-accepted applicants. More specifically, a person who completes a program like MPLP has about a 0.16 higher probability of running for office. The prior office variable also shows a significant difference. Individuals who have previously held office have about a 0.22 higher probability of running for office than those who have not. On other hand, there is no significant difference in the probability of running for office as it pertains to individuals who do and do not express a desire to run. Similarly, political party involvement does not increase the probability that an individual will run for office in comparison to those who do not participate in that activity. All together, this appears to suggest that training program participation is providing some benefit to its participants such that they feel prepared to run and do indeed run for office. The fact that individuals who have held prior office are likely to run is not surprising. There is a long literature on progressive political ambition (see Fowler, 2010) that would suggest that ambitious politicians use lower office as a stepping to stone to higher office. The fact that individuals who have held prior office are interested in completing a training program may speak to potential network and resource benefits of training programs that are not explicitly captured here.

Finally, I contend with potential interaction effects with gender and race in the Table

Despite the fact that the product term is not significant in either model in Table 2.3, this does not rule out the potential that the second difference is significant (Ai and Norton, 2003; Norton et al., 2004). In Figure 4, I compute the marginal effect of the change in the product term for race and being accepted into the program as well as gender and being accepted into the program. The graphs on the left show the magnitude of the interaction effect for race and gender. The effect appears to be quite small for both race and gender. In looking at the

Table 3: The Impact of Political Training Programs on Running for Office: Matched Interaction Models

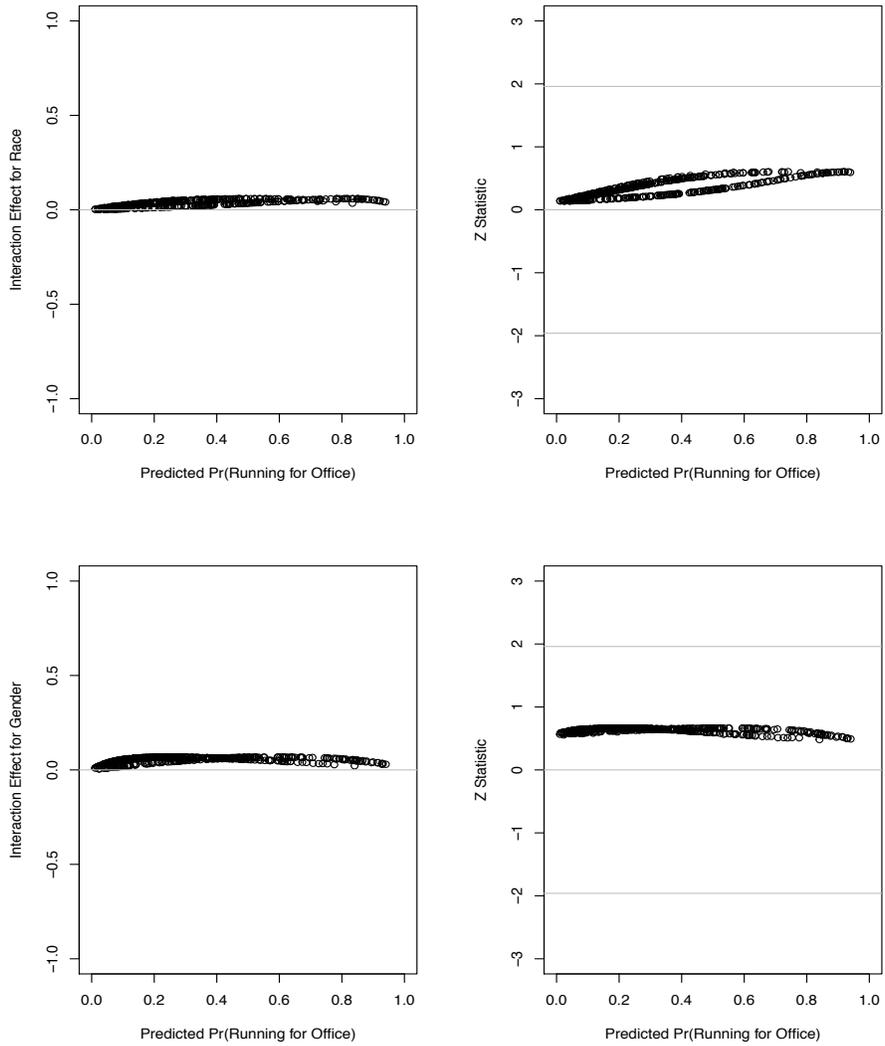
	<i>Dependent variable: Ran for Office</i>	
	Gender Interaction Model	Race Interaction Model
Accepted	1.311*** (0.407)	1.394*** (0.368)
Prior Office	1.788*** (0.321)	1.789*** (0.320)
Women	-0.096 (0.310)	0.030 (0.239)
POC	-0.134 (0.266)	-0.234 (0.348)
Involved in Community Group	-0.646 (0.386)	-0.653 (0.387)
Involved in Party	0.972*** (0.294)	0.969*** (0.294)
College	0.362 (0.251)	0.362 (0.251)
Higher Degree	-0.347 (0.371)	-0.366 (0.369)
Interview Score	-0.0002 (0.007)	0.0002 (0.007)
Desire to Run	1.051** (0.444)	1.040** (0.446)
Age	0.034*** (0.011)	0.034*** (0.011)
Accepted x Women	0.302 (0.466)	
Accepted x POC		0.237 (0.528)
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓
Constant	-4.327*** (0.966)	-4.358*** (0.961)
Observations	501	501
Log Likelihood	-247.076	-247.186
Akaike Inf. Crit.	544.152	544.371

Note:

p<0.05; *p<0.01

significance of the interaction effects, both appear to be non-significant. Thus, this would suggest that the product term is not meaningful for the model. Substantively, this finding indicates that race and gender are not barriers for potential officeholders who complete programs like MPLP.

Figure 4: Interaction Effects for Race and Gender



Robustness Check

While using matching can be instructive in making causal claims about relationships in observational data, the use of the method can reduce the sample size for further analysis because some observations do not have a match and are subsequently not included in the matched data. For this reason, I bootstrap the matched model in order to ensure that the inferences I make here are not biased by the size of the sample. In particular, I use random-x resampling, which selects bootstrapped samples of the observations, fits a model, and then determines the standard errors from the bootstrap distribution. I present the model as Figure 4. I resample data from the matched model 1000 times and use bias corrected and accelerated confidence intervals to determine coefficient significance.¹⁰ The bootstrapped model appears to approximate the full matched model. The coefficients that were significant in the matched model, being accepted into the program, having held prior office, and desire to run for office, maintain their significance in the bootstrapped model. All other variables are non-significant. This would suggest that the specification in the original model is capturing an effect that is not an artifact of sample size and that training program participation is meaningful.

Discussion

While the literature on political ambition has progressed, there is still much to be learned about the path from the pool of eligible candidates to elected office for current and potential

¹⁰Bias corrected and accelerated confidence intervals correct for skewness in the bootstrap distribution and gives the confidence interval on the original scale (DiCiccio and Efron, 1996).

Table 4: Bootstrapped Full Model (Matched)

<i>Dependent variable: Ran for Office</i>			
	Original	Bias	Std. Error
Intercept	-4.654**	-0.478	1.240
Accepted	1.477**	0.108	0.382
Prior Office	1.838**	0.154	0.381
Gender	2.465	0.006	0.266
Race	-1.456	-0.017	0.298
Involved in Community Group	-6.464	-0.054	0.435
Involved with Party	9.829**	0.064	0.269
Education: College	3.635	0.034	0.278
Education: Higher Degree	-3.846	-0.028	0.442
Interview Score	-1.793	0.004	0.016
Desire to Run	1.309**	0.152	0.572
Age	8.894	-0.645	3.371
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓

Note: **p<0.05

officeholders. The most recent research has moved toward looking at individuals in the pre-emergence stage, but the study of individuals that participate in candidate training programs has not been fully considered. Political training programs present a meaningful way to look at latent candidacy particularly because of the difficulty in identifying all potential candidates for electoral races. We can certainly identify incumbents and their likelihood of running for the same position again, but challengers are a different story because their decision process to enter the race is unknown and more simply we do not know who these individuals are. The study of political training programs could provide further insight into candidates' decision to enter the electoral arena as well as better specify what types of people are likely to run for office.

This work makes a couple of important contributions to the current literature. First, I theoretically situate the discussion of political training programs in the political participa-

tion literature using Verba, Scholzman and Brady's theory of participation as a framework. Running for political office is most certainly a form of political participation and should be treated as such. By my account and that of previous work, political training programs account for the main tenants of the theory - capacity, motivation, and recruitment - that lead to political engagement. However, just what activities, above and beyond the contribution of political training programs, lend to office seeking behavior still requires further examination.

Second, I show that participation in a political training program is positively associated with the observed behavior of running for office. This result stands with matched data (a quasi-experimental context) and unmatched data. Indeed, the examination of MPLP applicants presents a unique sample of individuals, who for the most part, express interest in running for office. I present these individuals as latent candidates because of their political aspirations and the fact that the desire to run is positively associated with running for office. Although desiring to run does not significantly predict office seeking behavior, Figure 3.1 shows that it is the individuals who have participated in the program that are more likely to enter an electoral race.

Finally, I present an interesting puzzle in my findings. While I was able to show a relationship between participating in the Michigan Political Leadership Program and the expression of political ambition (running for office), how participation in a program like MPLP influences the decision to run for office remains a question. More specifically, my analysis here presents MPLP as a black box and future work should focus how the inner workings of political training programs influence outcomes like running for office, (Sweet-Cushman, 2018, see). Further research is certainly necessary to understand what factors are meaningful for members of minority communities to seek office. Sanbonmatsu 2015

provides some qualitative evidence that the decision to seek office, at least among minority women from candidate training programs, is influenced by the ability to build support and resources to run. Understanding how these factors may be external to or even associated with program participation however might be useful particularly because many candidate training programs target women for political office. The success rate of these programs might speak to where these candidates in particular emerge and the office for which they choose to run. Further examination of training programs might also prove useful in better understanding the paths to candidacy for women and minorities.

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Appendix

Table 5: Balance Statistics for Matched Sample

	Means Treated	Means Control	SD Control	Mean Diff	eQQ Med	eQQ Mean	eQQ Max
distance	0.3253	0.3089	0.1625	0.0163	0.1827	0.1609	0.2061
Men	0.4952	0.4952	0.5008	0.0000	0.0000	0.0053	1.0000
Women	0.5048	0.5048	0.5008	0.0000	0.0000	0.0053	1.0000
POC	0.2556	0.2556	0.4369	0.0000	0.0000	0.0160	1.0000
College	0.3770	0.3770	0.4854	0.0000	0.0000	0.0904	1.0000
Higher Degree	0.1118	0.1118	0.3157	0.0000	0.0000	0.0798	1.0000
Interview Score	76.7160	75.5176	20.5634	1.1984	9.0000	11.0638	70.0000

Table 6: Percent Balance Improvement for Matched Sample

	Mean Diff.	eQQ Med	eQQ Mean	eQQ Max
distance	91.9106	22.2377	20.6708	22.3503
Male	100.0000	0.0000	-Inf	-Inf
Female	100.0000	0.0000	-3.7234	0.0000
POC	100.0000	0.0000	37.7660	0.0000
College	100.0000	0.0000	-3.7234	0.0000
Higher Degree	100.0000	0.0000	2.7593	0.0000
Interview Score	92.7772	18.1818	33.9018	5.4054

Table 7: Sample Size of the Control and Treated Groups

	Control	Treated
All	391	195
Matched	313	188
Unmatched	78	7
Discarded	0	0

Table 8: The Impact of Political Training Programs on Running for Office

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Ran_Office1			
	Unmatched (1)	Matched (2)	Unmatched (3)	Matched (4)
Accepted	1.000*** (0.218)	1.047*** (0.226)	1.214*** (0.318)	1.451*** (0.346)
Prior Office			1.695*** (0.294)	1.790*** (0.321)
College	0.378* (0.212)	0.420* (0.224)	0.371 (0.234)	0.364 (0.250)
Higher Degree	-0.362 (0.301)	-0.431 (0.335)	-0.236 (0.328)	-0.369 (0.370)
POC	-0.296 (0.214)	-0.272 (0.239)	-0.127 (0.235)	-0.134 (0.265)
Involved with Community Group			-0.499 (0.347)	-0.639* (0.386)
Involved with Party			0.900*** (0.274)	0.970*** (0.294)
Women	-0.181 (0.196)	-0.100 (0.212)	-0.059 (0.218)	0.032 (0.238)
Interview Score	0.007 (0.005)	0.004 (0.006)	0.006 (0.005)	0.0001 (0.007)
Desire	0.582* (0.323)	0.691** (0.347)	0.888** (0.403)	1.057** (0.444)
Age	0.044*** (0.009)	0.046*** (0.009)	0.032*** (0.010)	0.034*** (0.011)
Year2004			0.438 (0.408)	0.760* (0.439)
Year2005			-0.033 (0.506)	0.286 (0.537)
Year2006			0.817* (0.469)	1.054** (0.509)
Year2007			0.175 (0.498)	0.514 (0.530)
Year2008			0.805* (0.475)	1.373*** (0.521)
Year2009			0.191 (0.500)	0.845 (0.551)
Year2010			0.286 (0.616)	0.663 (0.698)
Year2011			0.914 (0.589)	1.399** (0.649)
Year2012			0.933* (0.539)	1.557** (0.644)
Year2013			-0.762 (0.575)	-0.784 (0.622)
Year2014			-1.245* (0.707)	-1.204 (0.808)
Year2015			-1.160* (0.690)	-0.860 (0.722)
Constant	-4.041*** (0.646)	-3.981*** (0.767)	-4.314*** (0.795)	-4.411*** (0.955)
Observations	586	501	586	501
Log Likelihood	-324.701	-285.402	-285.696	-247.287
Akaike Inf. Crit.	667.403	588.804	619.392	542.573

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table displays the full models depicted in the main body of the paper as Table 2. Here the fixed effects for year are displayed with accompanying coefficients and indicators for statistical significance.

Table 9: The Impact of Political Training Programs on Running for Office

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Ran_Office1			
	Unmatched (1)	Matched (2)	Unmatched (3)	Matched (4)
Accepted	1.000*** (0.218)	1.047*** (0.226)	1.214*** (0.318)	1.451*** (0.346)
Prior Office			1.695*** (0.294)	1.790*** (0.321)
College	0.378* (0.212)	0.420* (0.224)	0.371 (0.234)	0.364 (0.250)
Higher Degree	-0.362 (0.301)	-0.431 (0.335)	-0.236 (0.328)	-0.369 (0.370)
POC	-0.296 (0.214)	-0.272 (0.239)	-0.127 (0.235)	-0.134 (0.265)
Involved with Community Group			-0.499 (0.347)	-0.639* (0.386)
Involved with Party			0.900*** (0.274)	0.970*** (0.294)
Women	-0.181 (0.196)	-0.100 (0.212)	-0.059 (0.218)	0.032 (0.238)
Interview Score	0.007 (0.005)	0.004 (0.006)	0.006 (0.005)	0.0001 (0.007)
Desire	0.582* (0.323)	0.691** (0.347)	0.888** (0.403)	1.057** (0.444)
Age	0.044*** (0.009)	0.046*** (0.009)	0.032*** (0.010)	0.034*** (0.011)
Year2004			0.438 (0.408)	0.760* (0.439)
Year2005			-0.033 (0.506)	0.286 (0.537)
Year2006			0.817* (0.469)	1.054** (0.509)
Year2007			0.175 (0.498)	0.514 (0.530)
Year2008			0.805* (0.475)	1.373*** (0.521)
Year2009			0.191 (0.500)	0.845 (0.551)
Year2010			0.286 (0.616)	0.663 (0.698)
Year2011			0.914 (0.589)	1.399** (0.649)
Year2012			0.933* (0.539)	1.557** (0.644)
Year2013			-0.762 (0.575)	-0.784 (0.622)
Year2014			-1.245* (0.707)	-1.204 (0.808)
Year2015			-1.160* (0.690)	-0.860 (0.722)
Constant	-4.041*** (0.646)	-3.981*** (0.767)	-4.314*** (0.795)	-4.411*** (0.955)
Observations	586	501	586	501
Log Likelihood	-324.701	-285.402	-285.696	-247.287
Akaike Inf. Crit.	667.403	588.804	619.392	542.573

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table displays the full models depicted in the main body of the paper as Table 2. Here the fixed effects for year are displayed with accompanying coefficients and indicators for statistical significance.

Table 10: The Impact of Political Training Programs on Running for Office

<i>Dependent variable: Ran For Office</i>				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Accepted	0.682*** (0.229)	0.761*** (0.246)	1.072*** (0.355)	1.318*** (0.400)
Prior Office			2.001*** (0.338)	2.252*** (0.397)
College	0.075 (0.229)	0.065 (0.251)	0.091 (0.258)	0.051 (0.288)
Higher Degree	-0.443 (0.315)	-0.577 (0.351)	-0.314 (0.354)	-0.423 (0.404)
2004			0.758 (0.512)	0.956* (0.542)
2005			0.355 (0.551)	0.647 (0.608)
2006			0.982** (0.498)	0.920* (0.538)
2007			0.448 (0.528)	0.537 (0.561)
2008			1.397*** (0.510)	1.530*** (0.547)
2009			0.709 (0.545)	0.933 (0.605)
2010			0.704 (0.665)	0.655 (0.800)
2011			1.348** (0.629)	1.619** (0.682)
2012			1.314** (0.609)	1.397* (0.824)
2013			-1.624 (1.154)	-15.965 (703.274)
2014			-1.281 (0.818)	-2.646** (1.287)
2015			-1.097 (0.725)	-0.896 (0.772)
Arab American	-15.699 (1,131.286)		-16.402 (1,083.199)	
Asian	-0.391 (0.700)	-0.763 (1.158)	0.058 (0.751)	0.015 (1.211)
Black	-0.156 (0.255)	-0.214 (0.290)	-0.075 (0.285)	-0.193 (0.330)
Hispanic	0.131 (0.687)	0.604 (1.455)	0.223 (0.729)	0.544 (1.648)
Native American	-15.615 (940.649)	-13.671 (584.758)	-15.161 (830.678)	-15.745 (1,389.364)
Other	-0.181 (0.711)		0.513 (0.860)	
Involved in Community Group			-0.508 (0.397)	-0.741 (0.454)
Involved with Party			0.902*** (0.303)	0.821** (0.336)
Female	-0.172 (0.210)	-0.147 (0.232)	-0.103 (0.237)	-0.037 (0.265)
Interview Score	0.024*** (0.008)	0.028** (0.012)	0.023*** (0.008)	0.021* (0.012)
Desire to Run	0.438 (0.380)	0.788* (0.434)	0.886* (0.486)	1.538*** (0.573)
Constant	-3.246*** (0.735)	-3.964*** (1.087)	-4.573*** (0.923)	-5.070*** (1.257)
Observations	501	398	501	398
Log Likelihood	-278.984	-231.457	-237.605	-191.074
Akaike Inf. Crit.	583.969	484.914	531.210	434.147

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table displays an alternative specification for race from the one specified in the main body of the paper. The variable for race in the body of the paper is dichotomous and the one displayed here contains 7 categories for race. The category for white is left out of the model as a point of comparison. As indicated in a footnote in the paper, this specification for race is not significant.

Table 11: The Impact of Political Trainings Programs on Running for Office: Matched Interaction Models

<i>Dependent variable: Ran for Office</i>		
	Gender Interaction Model	Race Interaction Model
Accepted	1.311*** (0.407)	1.394*** (0.368)
Prior Office	1.788*** (0.321)	1.789*** (0.320)
Women	-0.096 (0.310)	0.030 (0.239)
POC	-0.134 (0.266)	-0.234 (0.348)
Involved in Community Group	-0.646* (0.386)	-0.653* (0.387)
Involved in Party	0.972*** (0.294)	0.969*** (0.294)
College	0.362 (0.251)	0.362 (0.251)
Higher Degree	-0.347 (0.371)	-0.366 (0.369)
Interview Score	-0.0002 (0.007)	0.0002 (0.007)
Desire	1.051** (0.444)	1.040** (0.446)
Age	0.034*** (0.011)	0.034*** (0.011)
2004	0.759* (0.439)	0.760* (0.439)
2005	0.286 (0.537)	0.269 (0.538)
2006	1.036** (0.510)	1.037** (0.510)
2007	0.498 (0.531)	0.510 (0.530)
2008	1.360*** (0.521)	1.361*** (0.522)
2009	0.846 (0.551)	0.841 (0.551)
2010	0.604 (0.705)	0.659 (0.698)
2011	1.393** (0.649)	1.415** (0.650)
2012	1.548** (0.645)	1.564** (0.645)
2013	-0.798 (0.624)	-0.772 (0.623)
2014	-1.245 (0.810)	-1.206 (0.807)
2015	-0.868 (0.720)	-0.881 (0.723)
Accepted x Women	0.302 (0.466)	
Accepted x POC		0.237 (0.528)
Constant	-4.327*** (0.966)	-4.358*** (0.961)
Observations	501	501
Log Likelihood	-247.076	-247.186
Akaike Inf. Crit.	544.152	544.371

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table displays an alternative specification for the interaction models specified in the main body of the paper. Here the fixed effects for year are displayed with accompanying coefficients and indicators for statistical significance.