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The Effect of Party Networks on Congressional Primaries

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Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

by

Shawn Thomas Patterson, Jr.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Effect of Party Networks on Congressional Primaries

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Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science
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The scholarship on political parties has largely focused on their declining influence. Specifically, many claim that through the widespread adoption of the partisan primary, control over the nomination of candidates has been largely relegated to the ambitions and talents of the office-seekers themselves. I challenge this perspective, arguing that networks of partisan interests still play a major role in determining a party's nominee. To support this claim, I combine field interviews, journalistic accounts, election results, and campaign finance disclosures to demonstrate the systematic effect of political networks on the electoral prospects of primary candidates. I provide a series of case studies to show the impact of party networks and to demonstrate the underlying mechanism – the diverse campaign resources that these networks are able to marshal on behalf of their candidates. To generalize these findings, I use campaign finance data for candidates between 1980 and 2014 to construct a novel measure of group support – existing network density – derived from the degree of coordination present among a candidate's campaign contributors. I find that greater network support provides a significant benefit to candidates seeking consequential open-seat nominations for the House of Representatives. These effects remain over time and across parties after controlling for measures of candidate viability, such as fundraising and previous elected experience. This suggests that while the party organizations may have fewer formal powers over the selection of candidates for office, the constellation of organized interests constituting these political parties have lost little of their clout in the electoral process.

The dissertation of Shawn Thomas Patterson, Jr. is approved.

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2018

To my grandparents

Anne, Edward, Bill, and Nancy

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Beginning in the summer of 2013, under the direction of my phenomenal advisors Kathleen Bawn and John Zaller, I began interviewing candidates, interest groups, party leaders, campaign operatives, local activists, journalists, and primary voters in an open-ended attempt to understand party nominations. In my work for the *Parties on the Ground* project, I traveled to ten states, conducted interviews in over twenty congressional districts, and spoke to dozens of people over hundreds of hours. These experiences tore down my intuitions, inspired my work and motivated this dissertation. It is impossible to overstate just how valuable this hands-on political education in American politics was to my academic development.

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To Kathy in particular, I owe more thanks than words can convey. As my dissertation

than could possibly be advisable for one's long-term mental health.

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Shawn Patterson, Jr.
May 30, 2018

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Requiem for the Smoke-Filled Rooms

After Donald Trump won the presidency, Democratic candidates began out-performing expectations in many special and off-cycle elections. In Kansas's 4th, Montana's At-Large, and Georgia's 6th, Democrats came within striking distance in congressional districts that had long been impregnable Republican strongholds. Democrats won the governors' mansions and numerous state legislative seats in New Jersey and Virginia – coming within one seat of taking back control in Virginia's House of Delegates. Most dramatically, Democrat Doug Jones won an open special election for the Senate in Alabama – a state that hadn't elected a Democrat to the Senate in 25 years. As a result of these bullish performances, Democrats no longer felt that retaking the House of Representatives in the 2018 midterms was inconceivable. Once safe Republican seats were increasingly seen as Democratic targets, including Representative John Culberson's (R-TX) 7th district.

Despite being reelected in 2016 with a comfortable 56% of the vote, Culberson's previously safe district voted for Hillary Clinton 49-47 over Donald Trump. Democrats nationally believed that his district was a prime pick-up opportunity, and so did the seven Democratic candidates that filed to run in the primary. As *The Houston Chronicle* (2018) described,

> "[e]ach one of the seven candidates running in this Democratic primary brings something impressive to the race. Jason Westin, 40, is a cancer researcher steeped in the details of health care policy. Lizzie Pannill Fletcher, 42, is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate who edited the *William and Mary Law Review* before becoming the first woman partner in a prominent local law firm. Alex Triantaphyllis, 33, is an eloquent young executive at a major non-profit who's attracted widespread support among the party faithful. Laura Moser, 40, is a lively progressive activist

who launched a national anti-Trump action movement. Ivan Sanchez, 30, is a young and energetic former congressional staffer who hopes his candidacy will inspire Hispanic voters. Joshua Butler, 32, is an administrator at the UT Health Science Center who talks about party unity with striking grace and eloquence. James Cargas, 51, an assistant city attorney specializing in energy issues, has invested years of sweat equity by running for this position in three previous election years."

Some observers worried that this diverse and divided pool of candidates would allow for a nominee too ideologically extreme to win the competitive general election. To the surprise of many, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) decided to take a controversial stand against one of the primary candidates, Laura Moser, to help nominate a candidate they felt more electable in November. The DCCC published a document online containing its opposition research against Moser. They posted a section from an op-ed in which Moser had parenthetically noted she'd "sooner have my teeth pulled out without anesthesia" than live in Paris, Texas. They claimed she was a carpetbagger, who was still "receiving the DC homestead exemption on her property," who only moved to the district to run for Congress. They criticized campaign expenditures made to her husband's consulting firm (DCCC 2018). In a press conference, DCCC communications director Meredith Kelly responded that they "are working every day at the DCCC to win the 24 seats that we need to take back the House, and we believe that voters who have been organizing for more than a year to hold their Republican representative accountable, they deserve to have a fighting chance in November" (Bownam 2018).

Moser did not take these attacks sitting down: "We're used to tough talk here in Texas, but it's disappointing to hear it from Washington operatives trying to tell Texans what to do. These kind of tactics are why people hate politics. The days where party bosses picked the candidates in their smoke filled rooms are over. DC needs to let Houston vote." And unfortunately for the DCCC, nor did her progressive supporters, such Jim Hightower, a boardmember of Our Revolution, the progressive network formed from supporters of Bernie Sander's presidential campaign: "The DCCC's ridiculous attacks on Laura Moser are why Democrats nationally have lost over 1,100 seats. Laura is a rising progressive advocate that the workaday people of Texas desperately need" (Nilsen 2018a). Their de-facto leader,

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), agreed, declaring it "outrageous" that the DCCC would get involved before the primary: "I'm especially distressed that the DCCC tried to do negative attacks against a very respectable and intelligent candidate who is running a serious campaign. That's just not acceptable. I suspect that it backfired on them, and I hope they don't do it again" (Svitek 2018). In the four days following the DCCC's attack, Moser raised $90,000 in online donations, suggesting some truth in Sanders' admonition (Hagen 2018a). Moreover, Jason Westin's internal polling had him in a close second to Fletcher prior to the DCCC's attack, but he quickly lost ground to Moser in the aftermath (Mervis 2018). But in response to this criticism, the DCCC only doubled down: "Unfortunately, Laura Moser's outright disgust for life in Texas disqualifies her as a general election candidate, and would rob voters of their opportunity to flip Texas' 7th in November" (Livingston 2018a).

The DCCC was not the only major group taking sides in the crowded seven-candidate Democratic primary. EMILY's List, one of the largest Democratic-leaning interest groups, also sided against Moser, endorsing Lizzie Pannill Fletcher and providing "funding for eight rounds of mailers as well as digital ads" supporting her in the primary (Grim 2018), to the tune of nearly $250,000 (FEC 2018a). Fletcher also had the support of Sherry Merfish, a major donor to the Democratic Party who bundled over $100,000 for the 2016 Clinton campaign (OpenSecrets 2018a), and who formerly worked for EMILY's List.

Organized labor, on the other hand, came out strongly against Fletcher because of her law firm's history in anti-labor litigation. Most notably the AFL-CIO of Texas "voted to anti-endorse Fletcher, meaning members were urged to vote for anyone but her" (Jilani and Grim 2018). Joe Dinkin, a spokesperson for the Working Families Party, criticized "Lizzie Fletcher's law firm, and Lizzie herself as a partner," because they "profited from the pain and loss of immigrant women janitors" (ibid.). The Working Families Party spent $30,000 in independent expenditures against Fletcher in the primary's first round (FEC 2018a).

Jason Westin, an oncologist and cancer researcher, had support from numerous organizations and individuals affiliated with the medical community. He was endorsed by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Society for Radiation Oncology, the American College of Radiology, and the American Association of Clinical

Endocrinologists (Westin for Congress 2018). He also had the support of 314 Action, an organization focused on electing doctors and scientists to elected office. In addition to financial support, 314 Action offers campaign training boot camps and actively recruits candidates from STEM fields. Their executive director, Joshua Morrow, explained that their "goal is not to get through 2018 and that's it, but to eventually be an EMILY's List for scientists" (Pathé 2017). All of these organizations also made financial contributions to his campaign. And of his itemized financial contributions, Westin raised over $235,000 from individuals listing medical occupations (FEC 2018b). His medical credentials were featured prominently in his campaign. His website header and campaign yard signs featured "Jason Westin, MD for Congress."

The local political establishment largely coalesced behind Alex Triantaphyllis, co-founder of a mentoring nonprofit for refugees in Houston, who at 33 was the youngest candidate in the race. He was considered the early frontrunner and was able to raise a staggering amount of money – over $1,000,000 with very less than $10,000 coming from PAC contributions (Schneider 2017a; 2017b). He had the support of many of the local Houston politicians, including endorsements from members of the Houston city council and trustees from the city Board of Education (Nilsen 2018a). He also had the endorsement and financial backing of Michael Skelly, a clean energy company CEO (and former Democratic candidate in the 7th district). In addition to his own contribution, multiple individuals from his company, Clean Line Energy, and his wife made contributions to his campaign as well.

In Texas, if no candidate wins a majority in the primary, the top two candidates then compete in a run-off. Both Fletcher and Moser qualified for the run-off, setting the Democrats on a path to re-fight the party wars of the 2016 presidential primary between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, with EMILY's List and the party establishment on one side, progressive activists and organized labor on the other. Moser herself lamented that there was "a lot of re-litigating of the 2016 campaign" and that attacks on her may have been connected to her previous support of Sanders' campaign (Guttenplan 2018). Given the vitriol of that campaign and the abundance of op-eds criticizing the Democrat's "gift for self-immolation" (Swartz 2018) and ability to "snatch defeat from the jaws of victory" (Nichols 2018), we could

forgive the DCCC any mourning over the loss of smoke-filled rooms and party conventions of the past.

From 30,000 feet, this race seems a prime example of political parties in decline. Moser's case seems a textbook example of the candidate-centered primary where "few congressional candidates find opposition from the local party leaders to be a significant handicap; neither is their support very helpful" (Jacobson 2009). *The Houston Chronicle* described each candidate based on their own qualities and ambitions with little mention of party officials and interest group leaders. Moser claimed that the party's opposition was actually helping her campaign (Dugyala 2018) and her advancement to the runoff was not in spite of, but because of backlash to the party's efforts. The crowded, chaotic field of candidates would appear as a party unable to coordinate.

Figure 1.1: Campaign Contributions to Elizabeth Fletcher and Laura Moser
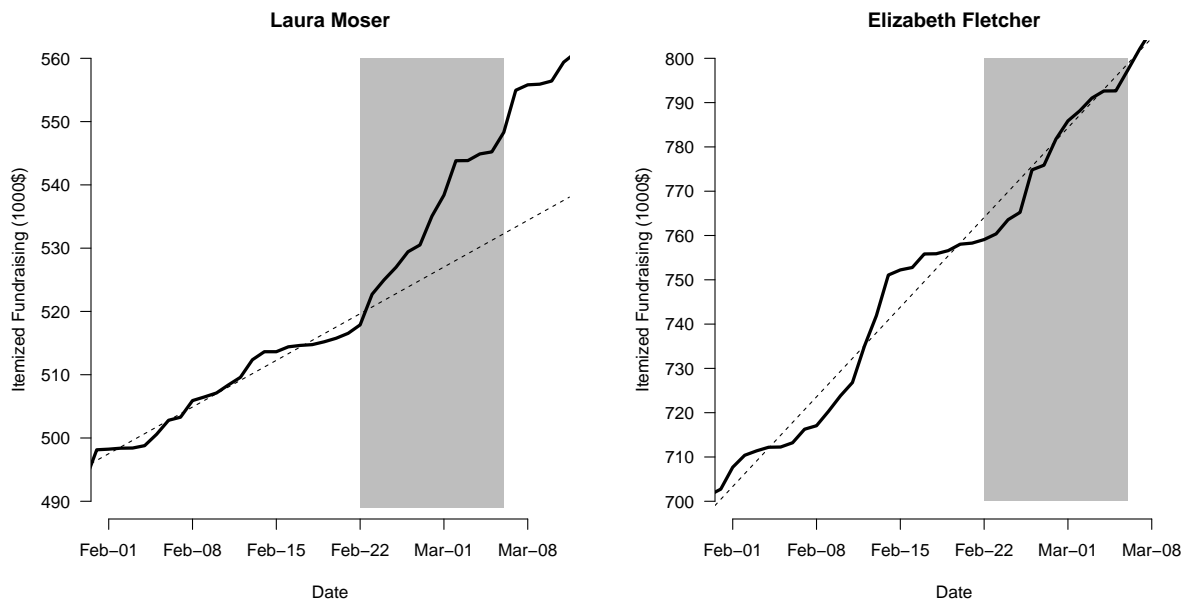
Note: The daily totals from itemized fundraising for the two candidates are presented above. The dashed line is a linear projection of fundraising expectations based on the rate of fundraising prior to the DCCC's attack on Moser on Feb. 23, 2018. The grey shaded area is the period of time between the attack and the primary.

But if we look a little closer, it's clear that Moser's success was not driven solely by

her ambitions and talents, but relied heavily on the support of a powerful coalition of actors within the Democratic party. Yes, her campaign faced opposition from the formal party organization through its fundraising arm, the DCCC, and a prominent national interest group, EMILY's List, but she was simultaneously supported by prominent national politicians like Bernie Sanders, a grassroots network of party activists, like Our Revolution, and a series of local interest groups, such as the Working Families Party and the Texas AFL-CIO – all groups firmly within the extended Democratic Party network. And that support was not inevitable. Figure 1.1 provides the daily fundraising totals for Fletcher and Moser during the run-up to the primary. In the aftermath of the DCCC's attack, Moser witnessed a significant increase in fundraising that her opponent lacked. This support had to be mobilized (or perhaps counter-mobilized in this case) in support of their candidate.

This mobilization, however, was short-lived. Months "after the DCCC derided her as a D.C. carpetbagger and furious activists leaped to her defense ahead of Texas primary," the negativity and conflict largely dissipated with both Fletcher and Moser focused on Culberson. Moreover, the "gush of online money" from Sanders' network never materialized into a long-term financial benefit for Moser, who entered the final week of the runoff with four times less cash on hand than Fletcher (Schneider 2018). On election day, the DCCC's and EMILY's List's investements paid off. Fletcher bested Moser by over a 2 to 1 margin on the May 22nd runoff (Livingston 2018b). Moser's concession fit with the new-found congeniality of the runoff: "The key objective here is to beat John Culberson. If this night turns out like it looks like it's going to turn out, I encourage everyone to support Lizzie Fletcher" (Hagen 2018b). In the end, the national Democratic Party network got their candidate.

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This dissertation is about political parties and their attempts to control the nomination of candidates in primary elections. It is about how networks of activists, interest groups, elected officials, and party operatives – the constellation of actors constituting the modern extended party – coordinate resources behind their chosen candidates to the benefit of those campaigns. It is about these organized networks of partisan actors that "own the party"

and "make nominations" (Schattschnieder 1942, p. 64). It is an attempt to show that these diffuse coalitions of political actors have not lost their influence over nominations to the talents and ambitions of individual candidates. It is, in sum, and attempt to show that in congressional primaries, the behavior of organized groups holds significant influence over who wins the nomination.

1.2   Overview

Toward that aim, this dissertation is organized as follows. In Chapter 2, I outline a theory of political parties that encompasses the network of party actors at work in party primaries and justify why these actors would be so motivated to compete in primaries. This work relies heavily on the theoretical contributions of previous work viewing parties as extended networks (Bawn et al. 2012; Cohen et al. 2008; Koger, Noel, and Masket 2009; 2010; Desmarais, La Raja, and Kowal 2015; Schwartz 1990; among others). I extend this conception of a party network both theoretically and methodologically. Theoretically, I push back on the assumption of network cooperation and suggest that under many circumstances actors within the extended party network have every incentive to compete among themselves. Methodologically, I expand the universe of potential network members to include a greater variety of actors with a greater variety of resources available to influence nomination contests.

Consider just the array of actors involved in the Texas's 7th primary. The DCCC attempted to pressure Moser out of the race. EMILY's List endorsed and ran independent advertisements for Fletcher, while Sherry Merfish, a major Democratic bundler, helped her raise money. Our Revolution and Bernie Sander's national network worked with the Texas AFL-CIO and the Working Families Party to support Moser's campaign. In one race, the national party, local and national interest groups, elected officials, grassroots activists, and major campaign donors – all prominent players in an extended party network – marshaled resources and competed on behalf of their preferred nominee. While Moser may not have been the preferred candidate of the party's central player, her advancement to the runoff is not a sign of party atrophy, but a sign of changes in factional strength within the Democratic Party.

Any definition of party that ignores the diversity of potential players and their willingness to compete among themselves in these primaries misses critical sources of power and influence.

In Chapter 3, I provide an overview of the different types networks observed in the field during the 2014 primary election season. I provide detailed case studies of these types of party networks in action, both summarizing the general dynamics of the nomination contest while highlighting the resources marshaled by these networks on behalf of their preferred candidates. These case studies provide qualitative evidence that networks of party actors were in fact wielding tremendous influence in party nominations and that they did so by providing campaigns with benefits rarely available to candidates without network support.

The data for this chapter comes primarily from interviews with local journalists, party officials, activists, political consultants, interest groups, major donors, candidates, campaign staffers, local academics, and even the occasional primary voter – a snowball sample not inaccurately described as anyone and everyone who would talk to us – conducted as part of the larger *Parties on the Ground* project at UCLA. Data from these interviews are combined with journalistic accounts, political histories of the region, campaign finance disclosures, and eventual primary and convention vote outcomes to describe a holistic account of the political systems in which each contest takes place.

Chapter 4 begins by summarizing and expanding on the resources these networks have available to them in party primaries. Gathering evidence of party network support, however, is impractical for a large number of races. Many of the resources are simply difficult to track, like endorsements, where no centralized record source is available, and the universe of potential endorsers is unknown beforehand (not to mention interest groups propensity to scrub their support for candidates who lose elections). Other resources, like elite attempts to clear the field or pressure candidates out of the race, are usually purposefully kept out of the public eye. Therefore, I propose a novel measure to determine the degree of group support derived from the network of campaign contributors supporting a particular candidate. The strict, standardized reporting requirements in combination with the importance of financial support among networks of all types allow for a measure that transcends the particularities of individual races, and allows us to speak to the impact of organized party network support

in a more systematic fashion.

To construct the existing network density (END) score for a particular candidate, I compile a list of every donor who made a contribution to that candidate during the primary (t_1). For each donor in this list, I then find every donation they made in the previous election cycle (t_0). I limit these contributions to those made in the primary to all non-presidential federal campaigns. I next construct a network where these donors are connected to each other if they donated to the same candidate in this prior primary cycle (t_0). Finally, I calculate that network's density – the ratio of the ties within the network to the number of possible ties for a network of that size. I focus on the behavior of donors in the election cycle prior in order to establish that these donors are not simply re-election coalitions pulled together in a particular election by a particular candidate. Candidates who score higher on this measure are those whose supporters are frequently coordinated in their party's primary. Those who score low on this measure do not have the support of a consistently activated network of contributors. By demonstrating that these donors have consistent patterns of giving over time, I can show that these networks are organized and durable – signaling group support.

In Chapter 5, I use this new measure to account for variation in candidates' likelihoods of dropping out of a primary contest. Given how important the field of candidates in a primary is in determining the eventual winner, the party network's ability to shape the field is one of it's most influential, if difficult to observe, resources. I find that candidates with denser networks of support – those candidates with the support of more donors who frequently work together in their party's primary – are on average *more* likely to drop-out of the race. In other words, all else equal, candidates more connected to elements of the party network are more likely to capitulate to field clearing efforts. Given how central these networks are in facilitating an individual's political career, it makes sense that candidates with the support of factions within the extended party network would be most likely to respond to field clearing pressures of the party at-large. More generally, this finding suggests that party actors influence the political prospects of primary candidates long before voters head to the polls by shaping the pool of candidates from which they will be able to choose.

The finding that candidates with higher END scores are more likely to drop out may

seem at odds with this dissertation's overall argument that network support is a political advantage to individuals seeking their party's nomination. But as I will demonstrate, dropping out is not always a disadvantage for ambitious candidate with the support of an organized groups. Individuals able to maintain relationships with these networks and who acquiesce to the pressures not to run for Congress are often rewarded with support in pursuit of other offices or future congressional runs. For example, in Pennsylvania's 13th district, speculation was that Jon Saidel dropped out to have union's support for his mayoral bid the following year (see Otterbein 2015). And in Arizona, the UFCW explicitly compelled a candidate to drop out in exchange for support seeking a county supervisor position (Ocampo 2017). Increasing the likelihood of dropping out may appear a "disadvantage" for candidates with networked support, but in reality this often signals the maintenance of a mutually beneficial relationship between a group and their would-be agent.

I next turn to the nomination contest itself. Chapter 6 presents estimates of the effect of a candidate's END score has on their likelihood of winning consequential open-seat primaries to the House of Representatives between 1982 and 2014. I find that those candidates with the support of organized portions of the party network are significantly more likely to win their primary contest. Importantly, these effects remain over time and across party after controlling for traditional measures of candidate success, such as fundraising and candidate quality. To address some concerns of endogeneity, I perform a series of Granger causality tests to suggest that network support is driving electoral prospects, and not the other way around. In sum, I argue that party networks, broadly defined, are still powerful forces in choosing the party's nominees for Congress. They often (although not always) lack the formal power to select the nominee, but they do have access to scarce campaign resources that can significantly impact the outcome of a particular primary.

Lastly, in Chapter 7, I discuss the implications of a nominating system dominated by intense policy-demanding groups. As both a conclusion and jumping-off point for future work, I discuss what effects a group-centered nominations could have on polarization and representation more broadly.

CHAPTER 2

Primary Elections and Political Parties

"He who can make the nominations is the owner of the party."

– E. E. Schattschneider[1]

2.1 Overview

This dissertation is an attempt to push back on the predominant, candidate-centered view of political parties and elections. Yes, the political environment rewards the talented politician. But the supply of ambitious candidates, while not infinite, far exceeds the number of seats in Congress. This provides parties and the constellation of interests that constitute them with the potential to serve as gatekeepers to elected office. The decision to run may or may not lay solely under the volition of a self-motivated politician, but the ability to *succeed* in those endeavors is another matter entirely. I aim to demonstrate that members of the extended network of the major political parties still hold influence over the nomination of candidates in Congressional primaries. But to make this argument requires a broader, more inclusive definition of political parties than Downs' team of politicians. In this chapter, I briefly summarize the literature on the extended party network, expand on this theoretic framework to account for recent empirical findings, and conclude by highlighting the importance of open-seat nominations as a critical test of this theory.

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[1]Schattschneider, E.E. 1942. *Party Government.* New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc.

2.2 A Textbook Theory of Party Nominations

Some of the most salacious stories of political intrigue involve the machinations of parties in pursuit of power and in no realm have those efforts stood more memorable than in their attempts to control the nomination process. From the political machines and smoke-filled rooms of Daley's Chicago and Tweed's New York, to the Democratic Party's more recent forays into the Texas 7th district primary, examples of parties exerting control over nominations of candidates for elected office are the anecdotal lifeblood of party scholars.

Often, however, these instances of party influence are presented as merely foils to conventional experience. Jacobson notes that these stories are "noteworthy because they are so atypical...the nomination is [no longer] something to be awarded by the party but rather a prize to be fought over," with the lack of party support rarely "a significant handicap; neither is their support very helpful" (2009, p. 19). Jacobson's conclusion mirror Key's (1956, p. 271) conclusion from half a century prior that "to assert that party leadership develops candidates is more an attribution of a duty noted in the textbooks than a description of real activity." The national party has no formal role in the selection of congressional nominees, few states hold any sway in the process, and local political machines have largely faded into history. Primary elections, these scholars believe, have "deprived parties of their most important source of influence over elected officials" (Jacobson 2009, p. 14).

Surveys of congressional candidates in the late-1960s and early-1970s largely supported these conclusions. The findings "all demonstrated that individual motivations and expectations were critical in differentiating winners and losers" (Fowler 1993, p. 59), questioning the importance of party elites in the recruitment, training, and success of potential candidates (see Fishel 1973; Kingdon 1968; Leuthold 1968; Sullivan and O'Connor 1972). This in turn lead many to conclude that the nomination of candidates has become primarily "candidate-centered," in that "the desire, skills, and resources that candidates bring to the table in the electoral arena are the most important criteria separating serious candidates from those who have little chance of getting elected" (Herrnson 2011, p. 41). It was "the self-starter, the freebooting entrepreneur, the strategic politician" (Fowler 1993, p. 60), not the political

party, that drove outcomes in primary elections.

These conclusions arise from a view of political parties focused on Downs' "team of men [*sic*] seeking to control the governing apparatus by gaining office" (1957, p. 25). As Aldrich (1995 p. 5) summarizes, "the major political party is the creature of the politicians, the ambitious office seeker and the officeholder. They have created and maintained, used or abused, reformed or ignored the political party when doing so has furthered their goals and ambitions." In this tradition parties "formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies" (Downs 1957, p. 28), as winning elections "has to be the proximate goal of everyone, the goal that must be achieved over and over if other ends are to be entertained" (Mayhew 1972, p. 16).

Progressive reforms to the electoral process and the implementation of direct primaries in particular were proposed to loosen the hold of these very parties and politicians over the electoral process. The implementation of the direct primary would "remove control of the nominating process (and thus the recruitment of office holders) from the hands of party officials" (Maisel 2001, 107). As primary elections transferred the authority to make nominations from conventions dominated by party officers and elected officials to the electorate, parties would increasingly take a back seat to "the desire, skills, and resources" of individual candidates (Herrnson 2011). This candidate-centered view of parties and nominations is the predominant perspective in the field, featured prominently in the authoritative textbooks on political parties and congressional elections (see Herrnson 2009; Jacobson 2009; Hershey 2014). Given its prevalence, it should come as no surprise that "modern scholarship on parties rarely affords them any attention in the nomination process" (Hassell 2018).

2.3   A Group-Centered Alternative

Recent scholarship has pushed back against some of the candidate-centered findings of previous research. Calling into question many of the findings from early surveys of primary candidates, scholars have demonstrated the importance of party actors in the recruitment of women (Fox and Lawless 2005), minority (Ocampo 2017), and working-class candidates

(Carnes 2018). Others have noted how even without the power to formally nominate candidates, the national parties are still able to marshal important resources on behalf of candidates to their primary campaigns, including providing talented campaign staff (Cain 2013; see Robbins 2017), elite and interest group endorsements (Dominguez 2011), and the strategic recruitment and dissuasion of candidates (Broockman 2014; Ocampo 2017).

What these works have in common is a view of formal party organizations as only part of an extended party network of interest groups, advocacy organizations, candidates, and activists. Relying heavily on Bawn et al.'s (2012) group-centric theory of parties, these works return to Schattschneider's view of interest groups as the "raw materials of politics" (1942, pg. 17). Contesting the contemporary view of parties as "a team of politicians whose paramount goal is to win electoral office," these authors instead posit that parties "are best understood as coalitions of interest groups and activists seeking to capture and use government for their particular goals." In other words, these authors reverse Downs central premise that parties choose policy positions in order to win election and argue that they "cede as little policy to voters as possible" in pursuit of electing "candidates sympathetic to their goals, goals typically not shared by most ordinary voters" (Bawn et al. 2012).

But what is a "group" or a "network"? Again, borrowing from Bawn et al. (2015), "an organized group is one that has previously solved a collective action problem prior to supporting the candidate in question." This definition has three central components. First, the group is organized. These are not the coincidental actions of similarly motivated individuals, but the actions of a group. The bonds of this organizing principle form ties between individuals just as 'friending' connects social networks on Facebook and 'following' builds social networks on Twitter. They may be organized around particular interests or sweeping ideologies, but regardless of how they are organized, the key is they that are organized. Second, this act of organizing provides some resource or social benefit. Out of material self-interest, social incentives, or high-minded ideals, these co-motivated individuals have overcome the pathologies inhibiting collective action in order to provide an endorsement, coordinated campaign contributions, a call to action among their supporters, or even apolitical benefits like information, advocacy, or coordination. Finally, this organization occurred

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prior to supporting the candidate in question, meaning that the organizing principle of the organization is not loyalty to the particular candidate, *per se.* This has implications in the balance of power between organized interests and politicians in the political system. If the organization exists prior to and independent of individual campaigns, then these groups can serve as gatekeepers. If the organizations exist only in relation to a particular candidate, this would signal that they are less actors in their own right, and simply the electoral constituencies of a particular ambitious politician. A group, therefore, is a durable network of supporters consistently organized around a common goal.

Bawn et al. (2012) build their group-centered theory in a world in which there are no parties but there are organized interests hoping to "promote policies that benefit group members but impose costs on society as a whole." It would be hard to argue this an unreasonable assumption. Even before the formation of our first political parties, the Founders worried about organized interests believing that the "causes of faction are sown in the nature of man," and that these coalitions, "united and actuated by some common impulse of passion," would pursue policies "adversed to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community" (Madison 1787). Whether these worries were necessary aside, they were not ill-founded. Despite the conscious effort on their part to mitigate the "mischief of faction," in little over a decade following the ratification of the Constitution, two major parties – the most fearsome of faction – had taken hold over the politics of the Republic.

From this pre-party world, individual interests should find it profitable to join forces with other groups in support of a candidate receptive and supportive of their policy demands as "a candidate supported by multiple groups is even more likely to win" (Bawn et al. 2012). The cumulative benefits of maintaining this cooperation election cycle after election cycle provides the powerful incentive necessary to establish a long coalition of electoral cooperation – a political party. This cooperation, in turn, creates a single cohesive, if diffuse, party structure. Bawn et al. (2012) admit that the resulting coalitions may represent diverse interests, but argue that their desire to control government would push them toward compromise on a single nominee.

The platforms and ideologies of these political parties are then the result of bargaining among the policy-demanding factions within the party (see Karol 2009; Noel 2013, respectively), not an attempt to appease voters. While interests are constrained by voters' coarse and limited ability to monitor and sanction elected behavior, the complexity of the policy making process allows legislators to hide all but the most egregious "special interest boondoggles" in an "electoral blind spot" – a wide range of potential outcomes in which "voters are unable to reliably ascertain policy positions or evaluate party performance" (Bawn et al. 2012). In several studies of major changes to party platforms, scholars have found that the shifting strength of interest group factions within the parties, particularly on issues of civil rights (Baylor 2017), abortion (Cohen 2005), and gun control (Karol 2009), have explained the changes in behavior. This perspective also fits the first-hand narrative accounts of LGBT activists fighting for inclusion in the Democratic Party (O'Leary 2000).

While these authors admit that evidence assessing these competing hypotheses is hard to find, many scholars have provided evidence supportive of the central thrust of this theory. Cohen et al. (2008) found that party insiders have remained largely influential in the presidential nominating process (with perhaps a notable exception of the 2016 Republican nomination, see Cohen et al. 2016). Masket (2009) found that coalitions of policy-demanding groups often formed durable networks of support for nominating candidates in five regions of California. Rauch and La Raja (2017) find that in the modern primary environment, independent groups control much of the "recruitment, training, networking, [and] grassroots cultivation...grooming candidacies from the very earliest stages." So influential do they find these organizations in the "invisible primary" that "by the time the primary ballot is printed, it's often too late" for candidates lacking such organized support.

In comparison, a central prediction of the Downsian party – namely the convergence of party platforms toward some ideological center – fails to materialize in empirical studies. While scholars have recognized this failure to converge, they argue that the divergence is simply the byproduct of candidates attempting to appeal to two different audiences, the primary and general electorate (Aldrich 2011). However, evidence here too is lacking. Studies of primary voters find them lacking the information about primary candidates necessary to

reward or penalize ideological extremity (Alher, Citrin, and Lenz 2016; DeMora et al. 2015) and not altogether dissimilar from their general election co-partisans (Sides et al. 2018). Even if "in the absence of the primary electoral pressures, politicians could adhere more to the political center in classic Downsian fashion" (McGhee et al. 2014), this would not explain why members of Congress appear to be *more* ideologically extreme than even their district's co-partisans (Bufami and Herron 2010).

Moreover, scholars have increasingly found that these deviations from moderation are costly – the sanctioning of voters is biased in favor of moderation and not the "party brand" (see Cox and McCubbins 2005). Carson et al. (2010) find an electoral cost of party loyalty on divisive bills. Similarly, Canes-Wrone et al. (2002) find that voters punish members for taking more ideologically distant positions on roll-call legislation, and Ansolabhere and Jones (2010) show that unpopular positions on controversial legislation hurts members of Congress on election day. For specific pieces of legislation, Nyhan et al. (2012) find that support for the Affordable Care Act caused constituents to view incumbents as more ideological, and thus lowered their support for these candidates. Rep. Marjorie Margolies (D-PA)'s defeat in 1994 is widely cited to have been the result of her tie-breaking vote for President Bill Clinton's 1993 budget (ibid., see Heidom 1994).[2] Yes, members of congress attempt to position themselves in order to assist in their reelection, but in light of Snyder and Groseclose's (2000) finding that members often vote with their constituents against their party when their votes are not needed, but rarely otherwise, the policy preferences and ideological positioning of members of Congress does not seem to be motivated by primarily by electoral incentives.

If we accept that party behavior is best accounted for as a coalition of policy-demanding organized interests, then we must be willing to concede "that real American parties are broader and less hierarchical than the formal party...a modern 'party' includes interest groups, consultants, 527s, and perhaps even partisan media" (Koger et al. 2010). And given this diversity of potential actors, there remains many avenues by which the party network could still control or at least significantly influence the nomination process shy of the

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[2]A fact readers will be reminded of in Chapter 3.

formal control derived from party conventions. While the party organizations may no longer have the formal power to nominate candidates, the constellation of interests and actors in this extended, diffuse party network have a diverse array of resources at their disposal that can be marshaled on behalf of their chosen candidates. From this standpoint, instances that would be previously viewed as failures on the part of parties, could simply be successes of different factions within a party coalition. Moser's primary win from Chapter 1's opening anecdote was less the result of a "freebooting political entrepreneur," and more so the success of a competing faction within the extended Democratic party network, albeit a faction less closely affiliated with the formal party organization.

But the Texas example points to one empirical shortcoming in Bawn et al. (2012) group-centered theory of parties. This theory predicts that interest groups within the party coalitions would "do better by cooperating in electoral politics than by competing against each other." And indeed when studying the general election behavior of partisan actors, this is largely what scholars find. By analyzing agreements to share mailing lists between elements of the party network, Koger, Masket, and Noel (2009) observe that "beneath the intraparty disagreements we observe in primary elections and policy debates there is a subterranean pattern of organizational cooperation" between the party organizations, partisan media outlets, and interest groups within the extended networks of the Democratic and Republican parties. Between 1994 and 2010, Desmarais, La Raja, and Kowal (2015) generally find two connected networks of donors – Republicans and Democrats – among general election contributors.

But in an overview of open-seat primaries during the 2014 election cycle we found that "different groups [often] support their own champions, and many nominations remain free-for-alls until the day of the primary" (Bawn et al. 2015). In the next section, I extend this theory of party behavior to include variations in electoral competition, and explain why competition, not cooperation, should be the modal expectation of the party network in congressional primaries.

2.4   Coordination and Competition in the Extended Network

How can we observe a largely cooperative national party network (Koger et al. 2010), yet simultaneous observe widespread factional conflict in open-seat primary contests (Bawn et al. 2014; 2015)? The answer lies in the confluence of non-competitive general elections and the high degree of homogeneity in co-partisan voting behavior in Congress.

Competition in the general election underlies the incentive to cooperate in party nominations. The costs associated with losing control of government drive members of the coalition to accept less-than-perfect nominees in exchange for the benefits of coordination – the conformity costs of maintaining the coalition. Bawn et al.'s (2012) theory drew heavily on the empirical and theoretical contributions of Cohen et al.'s (2008) study of presidential nominations, so it should be no surprise that competition was almost assumed into their theory, as all presidential general elections are at least somewhat competitive. Even elections that ended in landslides, like Reagan's 1984 reelection, were surrounded by some initial uncertainty – polling by Gallup in January of 1983 had both Sen. John Glenn (D-OH) and former Vice President Walter Mondale (D-MN) besting Reagan in the general election (Collier 1983).

Should we anticipate similar cooperation if the chances of losing a particular seat are exceedingly slim? Most House elections are easy to predict on the basis of party and there are few districts in which both parties are competitive. Despite the perception of electoral volatility, incumbent reelection rates have only dipped below 90% twice in the past 40 years (OpenSecrets 2018b). After the 2016 election, only 35 members are from districts won by the opposing parties presidential nominee (Cook 2017). And this lack of competition is not an artifact of modern polarization or gerrymandering. Even during the "textbook Congresses" of the 1960s and 70s fewer than 20% of congressional elections were decided by fewer than 10%, with the average winning candidate besting her opponent by over 36 points (CQ 2018). Among those few competitive general elections, national trends – presidential approval, retrospective evaluations, and inter-branch partisan balancing (Campbell 1960; Erikson 1988; Jacobson 1990; Rogers 2016; Tufte 1975) – explain a majority of the outcomes. The fundamentals are so strong in congressional elections, that observers were speculating

about the difficulties Senate Democrats would face in the 2018 midterms *before* the 2016 *primaries* had begun (Cillizza 2015). Surprising Senate elections in Massachusetts (2010) and Alabama (2017) may suggest that all races can be competitive in the general under some circumstances, but these anomalies are even more rare in the House. Outside of districts altered by redistricting, only one incumbent has lost in a district deemed safe for his or her party since 2010.

The lack of competition in the general election for many seats causes the dominant party's nomination to be tantamount to election. But in many ways the legislative behavior of these candidates is determined even before the primary concludes. The vast majority of co-partisans vote identically on all roll calls. Moreover, roll calls that allow co-partisans to differentiate themselves are often lopsided roll calls where the outcome is all but certain (Groseclose and Snyder 2000) – meaning that the slight deviations in co-partisan voting have little impact on the outcome of particular pieces of policy. The historic levels of polarization that currently describe both legislative chambers have been driven in part by increased homogeneity within parties (Poole and Rosenthal 2006) particularly on procedural votes (Theriault 2008). Many of those party insiders we interviewed in our overview of the 2014 primary cycle struggled to present policy issues on which the candidates would disagree (Bawn et al. 2014). In sum, the marginal benefit of nominating a particular candidate is not derived from their behavior on the House floor.

Instead, the benefit to organized interests competing in the primary comes from nominating a candidate seen as "one of us" – a candidate that would "champion" particular issues and actively serve the group beyond individual roll calls. This is not the first time it has been claimed that voters reward or punish incumbents for activities beyond policy. Fiorina (1989, p. 36) argued that the decline in competitive seats was due to the rise of a "Washington establishment" – a cabal of congressional "incumbents who deemphasize controversial policy positions and instead place heavy emphasis on nonpartisan, nonprogrammatic, constituency service" with congressmen that "would rather be reelected as an errand boy than not reelected at all." More recently, Grimmer et al. (2012) found that voters respond positively to legislator credit claims and constituent services even if the legislator had little to do with the

underlying legislation that generated the benefit. But the rewards of electing a champion go far beyond constituency service and ribbon cutting ceremonies. Common across districts and parties was a motivation among groups to support someone "who will actively represent the group's interest in committee deliberations, in formulating the technical details of legislative language, in behind-the-scene work that moves or block potential policy change" (Bawn et al. 2014).

Therefore groups, activists, and voters in primary elections have three considerations in determining whom to support: First, what are the chances of losing the general election? Second, what are the marginal benefits of electing your preferred nominee? And third, what are the risks or costs associated with supporting your preferred candidate? As described above, the risk of losing the general election is usually rare, and the marginal benefit of a particular candidate winning the nomination toward the party keeping or winning the seat is usually slim. The benefits of having a true "champion" in office are usually great. Activists were often able to recall in detail seemingly obscure efforts that previous elected officials made on their interests behalf. And while the *risk* of electing a least preferred candidate through non-strategic voting was often high (see Bawn et al. 2015 §10; Chapter 4 §4.6.1.), the costs were usually low. Even if a groups *least* preferred candidate was victorious in the primary, supporting thier champion carried little peril, knowing that regardless of the primary's outcome, a reliable partisan would be sent to Washington. Therefore, when competition is low, the marginal benefit of your preferred nominee is high, and the risk or cost of inadvertently electing a least preferred candidate are low, we should observe *competition*, not *coordination*, between the party factions.

2.5   A Toy Example

Consider the toy example in Table 2.1. In this example there are three groups: **A**, **B**, and **C**. There are also three potential nominees vying for their support: x, y, and z. The expected payoff for each potential nominee is provided in the table. Notably, each nominee has a positive payoff for each group. As members of the party coalition, each

Table 2.1: A Toy Example of Group Preferences

	A	B	C
x	9	1	3
y	3	9	1
z	1	3	9

would experience the benefit of profitable roll call votes if any co-partisan candidate wins the general election. And given how few competitive general elections nominees face, we can assume that the nominee will win the general election come November.

Each group has one of their own competing in the primary who would champion their particular issues, has developed longstanding relationships with the group, and has demonstrated themselves to be particularly faithful agents. The payoff for nominating this candidate is much higher for the respective groups (9 vs. 3 or 1). But the likelihood of a particular candidate securing the nomination is affected by whether or not the group's network supports their candidate's campaign. Without their support, the candidate will not win the primary. With their support, the candidate will be competitive, but with the large degree of uncertainty present in primary contests, their support will guarantee no more than competitiveness. The expected payoffs for **A** would be

$$EU_A = p_x(U_x) + p_y(U_y) + p_z(U_z).$$

If we assume sincere support among the networks, meaning that each group competes in the primary on behalf of their champion, then the likelihood of an individual candidate winning the primary is roughly equal ($\mathbf{A}^* : p_i = p_j$).[3] In this sincere scenario, the payoffs

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[3]This assumption may strike the reader as unreasonable, but in many of the primary races we observed in the 2014 election cycle, party insiders were unsure how a race would unfold even days prior to the election. Low turnout, little media coverage, weak and conflicting cues, and numerous candidate – all facts that hinder the academic study of primaries – also hinder even the most attuned politico's ability to predict outcomes. For example, in an e-mail to my co-authors a week before the PA-13 Democratic primary, I predicted Boyle 33%, Leach 29%, Margolies 21%, Arkoosh 17%. Respectable, but after months of field work, dozens of interviews, and two months living in Philadelphia, I was not even able to predict the correct rank ordering of the actual Boyle 40%, Margolies 27%, Leach 17%, Arkoosh 16%.

would be

$$EU_{A*} = \frac{1}{3}(U_x) + \frac{1}{3}(U_y) + \frac{1}{3}(U_z) - C$$
$$EU_{A*} = \frac{1}{3}(9) + \frac{1}{3}(3) + \frac{1}{3}(1) - C$$
$$EU_{A*} = 4.33 - C,$$

where C is the cost necessary to support the network's preferred candidate.

In isolation, this is uninformative, as adjustment to the magnitude of the payoffs even while holding the rank ordering constant would alter EU_A. But if we compare it to the scenario in which **A** strategically supports their second most preferred candidate (**A'** : p_x=0, but $p_y \gg p_z$), we can see the comparative value in competition over coordination:

$$EU_{A'} = 0(U_x) + \frac{9}{10}(U_y) + \frac{1}{10}(U_z) - C.$$
$$EU_{A'} = \frac{9}{10}(3) + \frac{1}{10}(1) - C.$$
$$EU_{A'} = 2.8 - C.$$

Even if the strategic choice all but guarantees the election of their second choice candidate, the added value of a champion exceeds the potential risks of potentially electing a least preferred candidate (4.33 > 2.8) as long as the marginal benefit of a first choice candidate to a second choice remains high.

But competition or strategic cooperation are not a networks only options. It is possible that groups would instead choose abstention. Here too their preferred candidate would not secure the nomination (**A¬** : p_x=0), but without their support, their second most preferred

candidate is simply another competitive candidate in the contest ($p_y = p_z$). The network, however, is able to conserve its resources and not expend the cost, C, in the primary. In this scenario, the cost of participation should factor heavily into the decision of whether a network should abstain versus acting strategically.

$$EU_{A\neg} = 0(U_x) + \frac{1}{2}(U_y) + \frac{1}{2}(U_z).$$
$$EU_{A\neg} = \frac{1}{2}(3) + \frac{1}{2}(1).$$
$$EU_{A\neg} = 2.$$

Here too the conclusions are predicated on the arbitrary differences in preferences between the second and third choices. Where the difference between first and second place was observed to be quite high among political activists, the difference between second and third choices were usually less sizable. If we decrease the differences in the expected values of non-preferred candidates, abstention becomes the preferable choice over strategic participation when supporting a candidate has any cost.

$$\lim_{U_z \to U_y} EU_{A'} = U_y - C < U_y = \lim_{U_z \to U_y} EU_{A\neg}.$$

In an environment in which there is a negligible chance of losing the general election and a relatively low cost of participation, political networks and organized interests should find it profitable to compete rather than cooperate in primary elections. But what about competitive seats? Let's assume that the payoffs from the first round carry over to the general election, however, now there is only a chance of winning the election. Fouirnaies and Hall (2018) estimate that a competitive primary reduces the probability of a party winning the general election by 21%. Therefore, let's assume that while the likelihood of winning the

general is equal ($W_U = .5$) for candidates nominated unanimously, it is reduced by 20% for those who experience a primary ($W_P = .4$). From the perspective of a party-affiliated group the election of an the opposition is an outcome best avoided, so assume the utility of that outcome to be negative (lets say $EL = $ -5). Figure 2.1 provides a diagram of the strategic considerations for group support under these conditions.

Figure 2.1: An Example Network Strategy with Competitive General Election
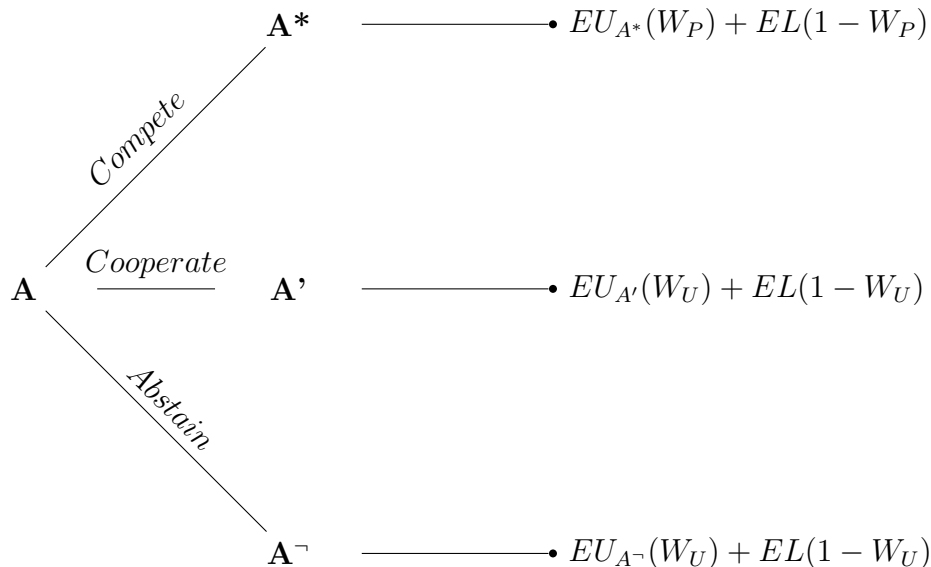
If we assume that the cost of participating in a primary is small in relation to the value of electing a champion ($C = 1$), we can compare the value of different strategies, as

$$EU_{A*} = (4.33 - 1)(.4) + (-5)(.6) \approx -1.7$$

$$EU_{A'} = (2.8 - 1)(.5) + (-5)(.5) = -1.6$$

$$EU_{A\neg} = 2(.5) + (-5)(.5) = -1.5,$$

which shows how in an environment of electoral competition, the preference for competition can be replaced with a strategy that rewards individual groups for not supporting their own candidate. And to show that this is not an artifact of the cost of primary participation, Figure

Figure 2.2: Expected Utility of Group Participation in Nominations
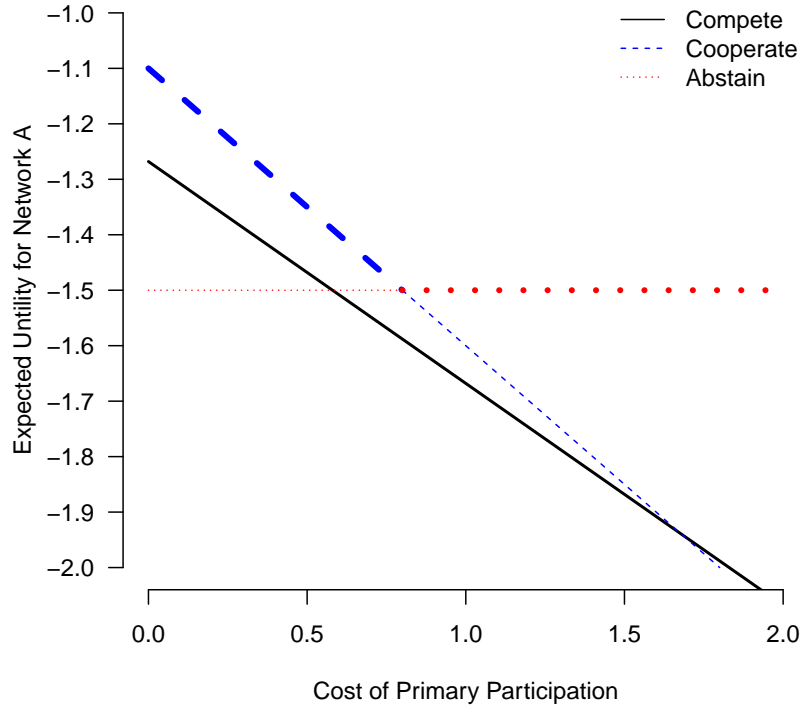
2.2 shows the expected utility for a range of costs. While there is a shift from cooperation to abstention as costs increase, the most beneficial strategies across the range (in bold) are always a non-competitive result.

The parameters for these toy examples, while entirely plausible, are admittedly arbitrary (to see a more generalized discussion of the topic, see Bawn et al. 2015). The purpose of this exercise is not to estimate when groups should or should not cooperate in primary elections, but to only suggest that groups may or may not have the incentive to cooperate in congressional primaries and that competition in the general election can influence those incentives. This is especially important given how few seats are competitive in the general election and how frequently we observe competition in the primary. Figure 2.3 provides the number of candidates receiving more than 5% of the vote in all consequential open-

Figure 2.3: Competition in Consequential Open-Seat Primaries
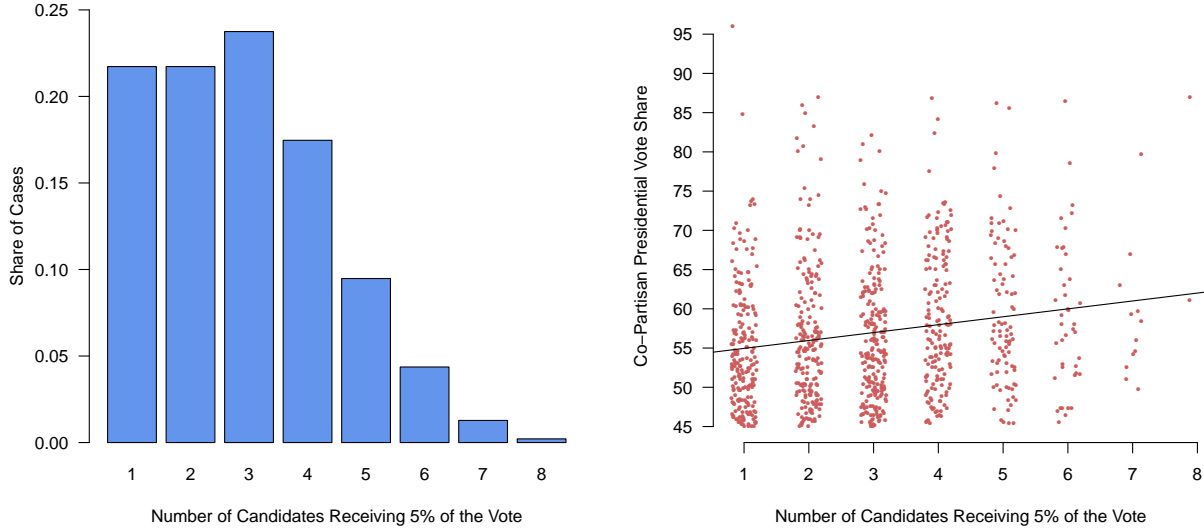
Note: The first graph in Figure 2.3 presents a histogram of the number of candidates receiving more than 5% of the vote in consequential open-seat primaries between 1980 and 2014. The second graph plots the relationship between this number and the share that party received for president in the previous election. The number of candidates is jittered around the value for visualization. The linear relationship is statistically significant ($p \approx 0$), but explains relatively little variation ($R^2 \approx 0.03$).

seat primaries (a definition that will be unpacked in §2.6.) between 1980 and 2014. In the majority of races, 3 or more candidates received more than 5% of the vote. There is also a significant positive relationship between the number of candidates and the lack of partisan competition in a district.

In our attempts to understand the role of party networks on the nomination of candidates for Congress, then, we should look beyond the actions of the formal party organizations to also include the diverse actions and resources used by the interest groups, activist networks, and policy-demanding organizations that constitute the expanded party network, as it will be the competition of these groups that influence the outcomes of primary elections.

2.6 The Importance of Consequential Open-Seat Nominations

In the analyses to follow, I set out to systematically measure the impact of network support on the electoral prospects of primary candidates. Yet not all primaries are created equal. The only thing more uncommon than an incumbent member of Congress losing reelection is an incumbent member of Congress losing renomination. This creates an endogeneity problem, when support for an incumbent is likely driven by the inevitability of their success. Therefore the universe of cases that would constitute the most critical test of this group hypothesis would be consequential open-seat primaries.

I define a ***consequential*** primary as one in which the eventual nominee could possibly win the general election – races with candidates sufficiently viable to justify investment from supporters. This would include the primaries for both parties in the handful of competitive districts, as well as the primaries for the dominant party in the majority of districts safe for either Democrats or Republicans. The primary itself could be highly contentious or uncontested; it could have a field of 9 candidates or have one nominated unanimously by convention. What is important is that the eventual nominee has a realistic chance in the general election. While studying the prospects and motivations of electoral long-shots is worthy in its own right, this project focuses only on those candidates with a realistic chance of impacting the composition of Congress.

Most analyses use *The Cook Report*'s 'Partisan Voting Index' (PVI) as a measure of general election competition. This variable compares how a district voted in the most recent two presidential elections in relation to the nation as a whole. While PVI scores are only available for elections after 1996, I use a similar metric and consider a district to be competitive for a party if the average two-party vote share of that party's presidential candidates in the two most recent elections is at least 45% of the two-party vote. Districts where both presidential candidates receive between 45% and 55% of the vote are considered competitive for both parties.

An ***open seat*** primary is one in which an incumbent is not seeking renomination either because they have retired, resigned, died, or are seeking higher office. These races

are "where the action is," with nearly two-thirds of congresspeople winning membership through and the majority of party-switches occurring in open seats (Gaddie and Bullock 2000). Open-seat races are the most common gateway into Congress for potential candidates because of incumbents' high renomination and reelection rates (Boatright 2013). Primaries for open seats are more competitive contests (Hogan 2003; Ocampo 2017) as the absence of an incumbent effects both on the levels of recruitment (Maestas et al. 2005) and ambition of potential candidates (Rohde 1979). Figure 2.4 presents a map of U.S. Congressional districts based on when it was last open. Despite Congress's reputation as an institution in which members retire from the House to a 'home,' nearly two-thirds (286) of districts have experienced open-seat contests in the previous decade. This would exclude the opening anecdote of Texas's 7th district, where Moser and Fletcher hope to challenge an incumbent in November.

Bawn et al. (2012) argue that nominations are the "natural focus" of the political parties, and open-seat contests provide a particular incentive for the competing factions to participate. These races often receive very little media coverage and attention from scholars (Bawn et al. 2017), limiting the amount of information available to voters. This creates an environment in which primary voters are more susceptible to campaign efforts at persuasion and mobilization (Bawn et al. 2012). Without party identification or incumbency advantage, voters are increasingly susceptibile to campaign efforts. Without the attention of national party organizations (see Rauch and La Raja 2017) the cost of those efforts in primaries is also diminished.

Without an incumbent competing in the contest, it is easier to parse the influence of groups and candidates. Disentangling whether a support network of an incumbent is more compatible with either a candidate-centered or group-centered theory of parties is difficult if not impossible. Their high reelection rates almost predicate that all active groups within that party network would support their reelection. But in an open seat, this inevitability is removed. If determinative actions in the election are conducted by existing groups, it can be safely said that they are organized beyond an individual candidacy as these candidates had never competed previously. Instead these groups get to serve as gatekeepers to up-and-

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Figure 2.4: Open Seat Congressional Races Since 2006
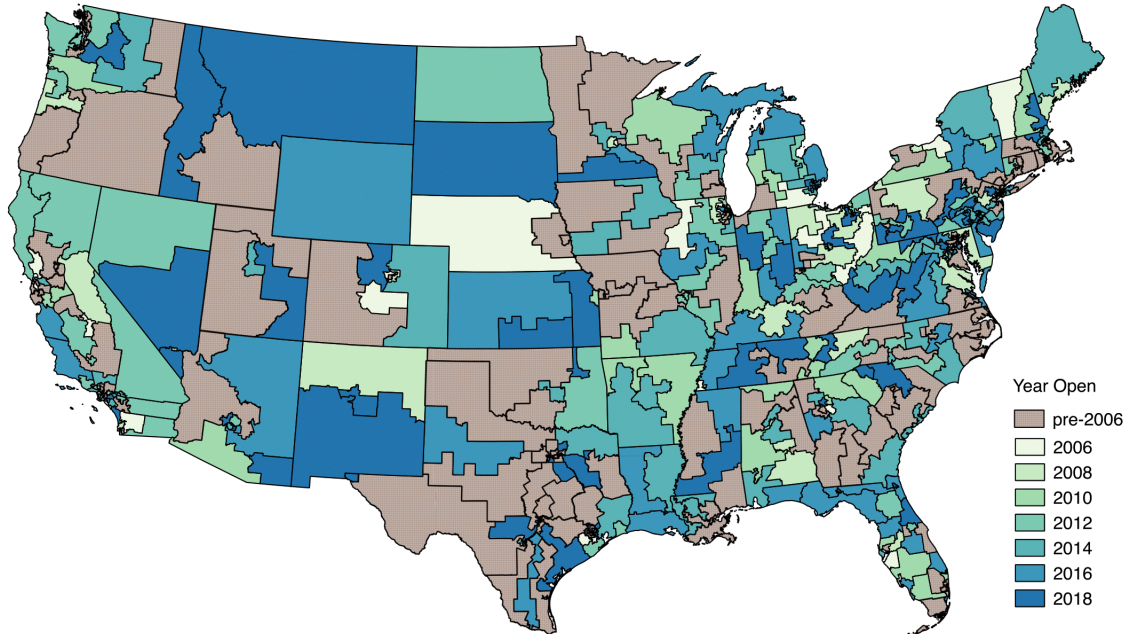
coming ambitious politicians.

Measuring these campaign efforts, however, is easier said than done. In the next chapter I provide a series of case studies describing the various resources and strategies used by organized groups to influence the outcomes of eleven nomination contests during the 2014 primary election cycle. These cases will highlight the diversity both in actors and resources mobilized in these primaries, and hopefully provide compelling qualitative evidence that party networks are still influential players in nominations.

CHAPTER 3

Networks on the Ground

"There's only one way to hold a district: you must study human nature and act accordin'. You can't study human nature in books. Books is a hindrance more than anything else. If you have been to college, so much the worse for you. You'll have to unlearn all you learned before you can get right down to human nature, and unlearnin' takes a lot of time. Some men can never forget what they learned at college...To learn real human nature you have to go among the people, see them and be seen."

– George W. Plunkitt[1]

3.1 Parties on the Ground

If one accepts this more diffuse definition of political parties, we should forgive an initial sense of pessimism or despondency toward our ability to study their behavior in a systematic fashion. The diversity of potential actors – from party organizations, to activist networks; from interest groups, to old-fashioned machines – multiplies both the potential environments and potential resources available for electoral intervention. And worse yet, the actions of these extended party networks are often purposefully kept from the public eye. The choice to recruit candidates for office, pressure others out of a contest, or expend resources in support of particular campaigns are at best highly sensitive decisions and at worst skirt the borders of legality.[2] Moreover, the individual state primary and nomination contests are scattered over

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[1]Riordan, William. 1905. *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall.* The Project Gutenberg.

[2]For example, the same union officials central to the coming example in Pennsylvania's 13th district are currently under a FBI investigation covering "virtually every aspect of the union's operations, as well as [the union leader's] personal finances" (Phillips and Fazlollah 2017).

the calendar from March until November, take place under a variety of rules and procedures, and have historically received little media or scholarly attention – all forces that hinder the systematic study of party activities.

However, it is the failure to focus on these obscured behaviors that gives occasion to critically paint political science as a "a drunk who looks for his lost car keys under a lamppost because that's where the light is best" (Masket 2009). Given how important recruitment and dissuasion factor into a candidate's decision to seek elected office (Carnes 2018; Fowler and McClure 1989; Fox and Lawless 2005; Ocampo 2017) and the central role that party actors play in nominations (Cohen et al. 2008; Masket 2009; Hassell 2016; 2018), understanding their behavior is most important in these opaque primary environments.

With these challenges in mind, six researchers from UCLA, myself included, undertook a mixed-method and relatively unstructured investigation into the dynamics behind open-seat nominations for the House of Representatives during the 2014 election cycle (see Bawn et al. 2015). The *Parties on the Ground* project made field trips to over 40 congressional districts to conduct hundreds of interviews with local journalists, party officials, activists, political consultants, interest groups, major donors, candidates, campaign staffers, local academics, and even the occasional primary voter – a snowball sample not inaccurately described as anyone and everyone who would talk to us – to determine how nomination contests worked across the country. Our efforts began in the summer of 2013 and continue to present. While we took initial inspiration for the interviews from the works of Fenno (1978), Fowler and McClure (1989), and Masket (2009), our approach remained flexible enough to account for the wide variation in activities and political actors. We gave our subjects the luxury of anonymity[3] in the hopes that this produced more forthcoming responses and only cite them by name when granted explicit permission. While there is some concern of selection bias in those subjects who were willing to speak with us, data from these interviews are combined with journalistic accounts, political histories of the region, campaign finance disclosures, and

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[3]All quotations from these interviews will be cited as part of *Parties on the Ground* (POG 2014). Transcripts of individual conversations with identifying information redacted will be provided upon request. Following publication, we will host the audio files in an archive for other scholars to investigate.

eventual primary and convention vote outcomes to describe a holistic account of the political systems in which each contest takes place.

The purpose of this chapter is not to summarize the findings of this larger project, but to highlight one specific pattern observed across these races that inspired this dissertation: the influence of both formal and informal *party networks* on the electoral prospects of candidates in pursuit of nomination. From national labor unions to small bands of like-minded business owners, from local party machines to informal mailing lists, organized interests mobilized their networks of support to influence nomination contests in their favor. In many cases, those interviewed concluded that with voters unable to rely on party identification or detailed media coverage of these races, it was the efforts of these networks that determined a primary's outcome. While the specific structure, composition, and motivations of these networks varied across districts and parties in substantively important ways, their general function as coordinating agents for donors and activists was consistent across nearly all of these races. Successful candidates in primaries were not "electoral self-starters" (Herrnson 2011), but agents competing for and on behalf of particular organized interests. These interests then in turn provided their candidates with resources unavailable to "freebooting political entrepreneurs" (Jacobson 2009), which in turn aided them in their primary and nominations contests.

Toward this aim, this chapter begins by providing a typology of party networks active in the 2014 cycle. Across these different races formal party organizations, national and local interest groups, and party activist networks succeeded in nominating a congressional candidate. For each type of network, I provide case studies detailing the general dynamics of the nomination contest while highlighting the methods and means used by these networks in support of their chosen candidates. Finally, I distill the commonalities across these different races to highlight how organized networks succeed in nominating their chosen candidates.

3.2 Groups within the Extended Party Network

A diverse array of actors with various levels of connection to the formal parties activated their networks and deployed resources on behalf of candidates in consequential open-seat primaries during the 2014 election cycle. Party networks were often centered around the usual suspects of partisan actors – EMILY's List and the Chamber of Commerce, trade unions and pro-life groups, members of Congress and county parties – but also included local networks of women mayors, maritime development industrialists, homeschooling advocates, and other informal organizations lacking the traditional "brick and mortar" interest group structure. It was this wide range of organizations and political structures that provided the resources and support that set their candidates apart from the "electoral self-starters" in primary contests.

Traditionally, this collection of organizations have been described by their relationship to the formal party organization. Herrnson (2009) defined political parties as "enduring multi-layered coalitions," with the formal party organization at its core, surrounded by "party allies that routinely work with one party in pursuit of their common goal" and the "party's base" in the electorate. Similarly, Koger, Masket, and Noel (2009; 2010) conceive of parties as "networks of co-operating actors," including "candidates and office holders; its formal apparatus; loyal donors, campaign workers and activists; allied interest groups; and friendly media outlets." In studying patterns of data exchanges between partisan actors, they observe largely cooperative party coalitions with the formal party organizations situated centrally in the network. Figure 3.1 provides a rough structure for the party networks described by these authors which highlights their relationship to the formal party organization.

Formal party organizations, politician-centered machines, local and national interest groups, and activist networks – the types of networks described in this structure – were all instrumental in the primary campaigns of candidates during the 2014 nominating cycle. While they may play a more muted role in particular nominations in particular districts, the formal party organizations are still central organizing institutions for national politics (Hassell 2016; 2018, Koger, Masket, Noel 2009; 2010). These organizations include the party

Figure 3.1: Political Parties as Enduring Multi-Layered Coalitions
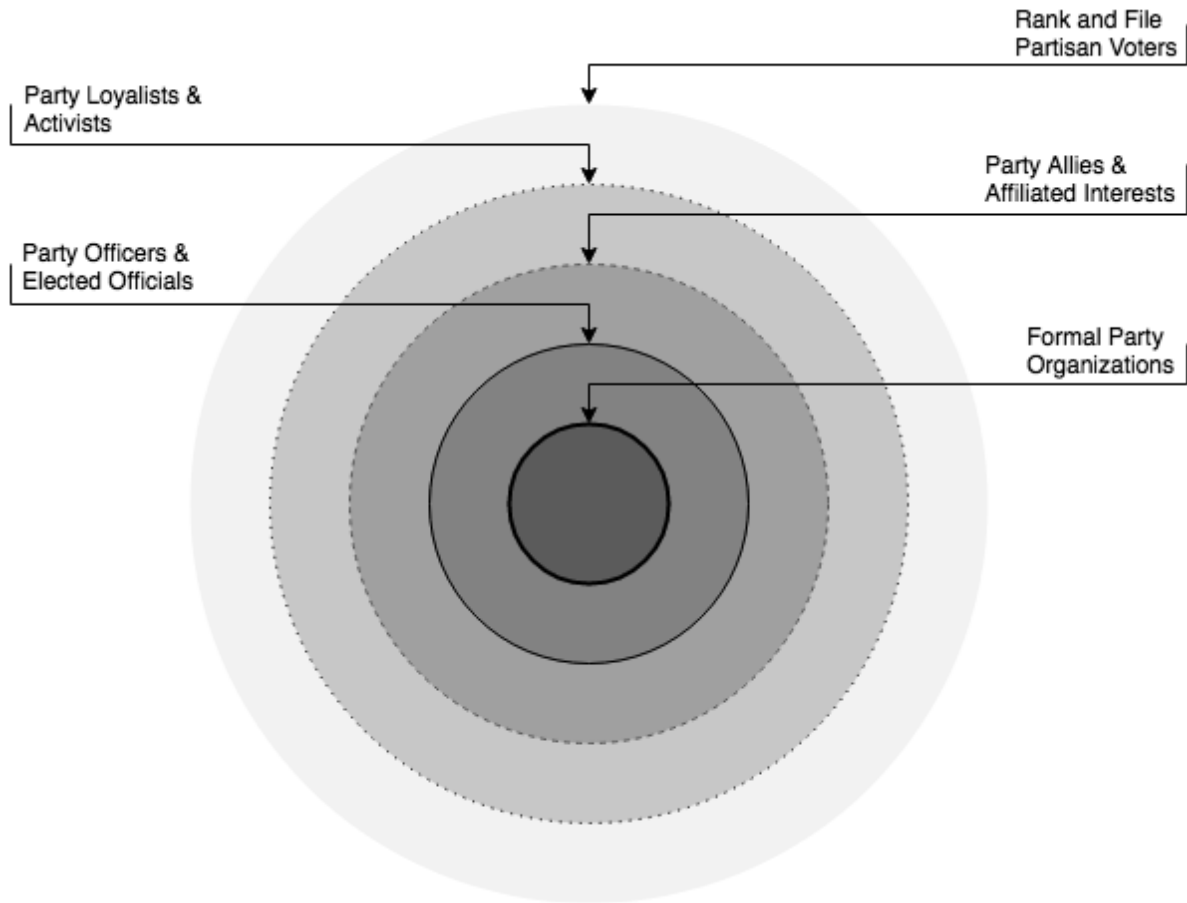
Note: A similar diagram is developed by Herrnson (2009). I recreate it here and rename some categories to include actors described in Koger, Masket, and Noel (2009; 2010).

congressional fundraising committees and the national party committee leadership. On the Democratic side, this includes the Democratic National Committee (DNC), the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), the Democratic Governors Association (DGA), the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (DLCC), the Association of State Democratic Chairs, and the state, county, congressional district, and local Democratic party organizations. Parallel organizations can be found for the Republican Party.

Closely related to these national party organizations are the party officers and elected

officials who represent them around the country. These actors often have sway in their own right. The federal structure of party leaders – the national, state, county, and local party organizations – usually provides an array of actors individual autonomy in making particular decisions. For example, elected officials have more control over the management of their own campaigns and local party officials have more control over particular resources, such as endorsements and volunteers. This autonomy allows these actors to participate in nomination contests in their own right, not simply as tools of the national party organization.

Party allies and affiliated interest groups constitute the most closely connected layer of the "party periphery" – those actors without a formal/legal connection to the party architecture. These actors are recognizable players in partisan politics: EMILY's List, the Sierra Club, and organized labor, among others, for the Democrats; Right to Life, the Chamber of Commerce, and the National Rifle Association, among others, for the Republicans. These groups, while organized around particular policy demands, are deeply embedded in the networks of particular parties.[4] The path to political success for these groups travels through their influence within one of the political parties. As someone familiar with EMILY's List's organization reported: "we're not trying to control a majority in Congress, we're trying to control a majority within the Democratic caucus" (POG 2014).

Beyond these partisan interest groups exists the network of loyalists and party activists. These are individuals with no formal positions as elected officials or party officers, that lack the structure of an organized interest or pressure group, but are involved in the political process beyond the ballot box. Unlike interest groups and elected officials which can straddle the local/national divide, activist networks of this variety are almost always locally bound. These are the frequent donors, convention delegates, political club members, and campaign volunteers that provide the financing and "boots on the ground" for most political activities. These actors are more often supporters than drivers of party activity – numerous activists described the social nature of "party work" and were more invested in supporting the "home

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[4]There are exceptions. These groups will occasionally work with incumbents on the other side of the aisle, such as Pro-Life Susan B. Anthony List's assistance for Dan Lipinski's renomination in Illinois (Desanctis 2018) or the Teamster's support of Rob Portman's (R-OH) reelection (Garcia 2016). These examples, however, are the exception, and even more rarely extended to races without entrenched incumbents.

team" rather than pressuring the party toward particular actions. As we will see in Pennsylvania's 6th district, however, their numbers in comparison to party officials and their focus in comparison to the electorate make them an influential, if rarely activated, type of network.

But, in the oft repeated adage of the late Tip O'Neill, "all politics is local." While these various actors may have a hierarchical or radial structure within the *national* party network, in individual nomination contests, these various types of groups often competed among themselves in order to support particular candidates. With competitive general elections a rarity, these organizations were able to compete freely, knowing that regardless of the outcome, a reliable partisan will be sent to Washington. The competition is driven not by a desire for support on particular votes, but by a desire to nominate a champion of their particular cause. Each type of network attempted to marshal resources to tip the scales in favor of "one of us," but the resources available to these networks and the environments in which they could be deployed varied by their nature.

Reflecting back on the motivating anecdote from Chapter 1, the groups and organizations supporting candidates competing in the primary were not cooperating, nor were the centrally organized around the formal party organization. The DCCC and EMILY's List were both supporting one candidate, Bernie Sander's and local organized labor another, while a national activist network of doctors and scientists supported yet another. These organizations often cooperate in the general election (Koger, Masket, Noel 2010) and see themselves as part of the larger party (e.g. Pathé 2017), but when the potential to nominate one of their own is on the line, this diverse assortment of actors are more than willing to compete among themselves.

3.3 The Party Sometimes Decides

Perhaps one of the most surprising discoveries from these investigations was the degree to which formal party organizations still hold sway over nominations for office. In Connecticut and Utah, party conventions have long been the primary means of nominating candidates

for office.[5] In Virginia, the state party can choose cycle-by-cycle, race-by-race what method they would prefer to select their nominee. Iowa uses party conventions to select nominees in the event that no candidate receives 35% of the vote. While not formally in control of the selection of nominees, New Jersey's county parties have the ability to provide their endorsed candidates with a preferential ballot placement that rarely, if ever, fails to secure them the plurality of support in the primary. These three resources – party conventions, control over voting methods, and preferential ballot placement – give local formal parties tremendously powerful resources in nomination contests.

The national parties, in comparison, had a more muted, but not imperceptible impact on these races. In the 2014, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee only made one endorsement in a contested open-seat primary, and their Republican counterparts avoided endorsements altogether. This is not to suggest, however, that either party's presence is not felt (see Hassell 2018). As I describe in Colorado, their behind the scenes efforts often shape the outcomes in congressional nominations.

3.3.1   Party Conventions

In 2014, Republican Mia Love had her eyes set on Utah's 4th district. Having lost to Democrat Jim Matheson by fewer than 800 votes in 2012, Love was considered the favorite for the GOP nomination following Matheson's decision to retire. Two insiders we spoke to described Love as essentially the nominee from when she announced – "the 2014 nomination was sewn up in 2012" (POG 2014). They mentioned that some state legislators, party officials, and major donors made calls to other candidates, discouraging them from challenging Love at the 2014 convention. Some in the party were concerned that the dysfunctions of Love's 2012 campaign would keep her from taking back the heavily Republican seat. In her previous campaign, she had three different campaign managers, occasionally missed events due to scheduling errors, and according to some party officials had trouble developing a

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[5]In late-2014, Utah passed SB54, which would allow candidates to gather signatures and move directly to the primary, avoiding the convention. The legality of this act is still being considered in the courts (Davidson and Harrie 2018), but would undoubtedly weaken the ability of formal parties to select their nominees in Utah.

message beyond national talking points (Canham 2014). But those concerns were clearly limited. Love received the support of 662 (78%) delegates on the first ballot at the Utah Republican convention – beating her opponent, Utah's Director of Business and Economic Development Bob Fuehr, and finishing well above the threshold needed to avoid a primary (Gehrke 2014). With the nomination in hand, Love went on to win the general election in a wave Republican year.

Love owed her 2014 nomination to the network of supporters that gained her the nomination in 2012 – a network of supporters brought to the convention by Senator Orrin Hatch. Early polls of the 2012 Utah Republican convention delegates suggested there was little chance of Orrin Hatch winning renomination. Hoping to avoid the fate of his junior colleague Bob Bennett, who lost renomination at the convention the previous cycle because his support of the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) angered the dominant Tea Party faction in the party, Hatch sought to elect more moderate supporters to the convention. According to Dave Hansen, Hatch's campaign manager, 2012 was "not going to be a campaign of persuading delegates...it is going to be a campaign of replacing delegates" (Kane 2012). The team of 25 campaign staffers organized between 20,000 and 35,000 pro-Hatch activists to vote in 2,000 precinct level contests to select delegates to the national convention.

He also benefited from the tacit support of the Mormon Church:

"For example, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sent its usual letter to Mormon churches urging its faithful to attend the party caucuses, but this time church leaders encouraged that the letter to be read to congregations multiple times. Then, Mormon leaders canceled church activities for the caucus nights of March 13 (Democrats) and March 15 (Republicans). In addition, most Utah Republicans had come to view former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney not just as a favorite son who ran the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City, he had become the likely next president in their eyes, the first Mormon to do so.

Romney made an ad supporting Hatch, who is also a Mormon, that ran repeatedly in the three weeks leading up to the caucus. Touting Hatch's possible chairmanship of the Finance Committee if Republicans win the Senate majority, Romney told voters to 'keep Orrin fighting for Utah'." (ibid).

Hatch's efforts were largely successful. Only 20% of those at the convention had been

delegates to the previous convention. And where surveys of delegates had initially shown Hatch with levels of support similar to Bennett in 2010, after the selection of the new delegates internal polling showed them within reach of the nomination threshold of 60%.

These more moderate delegates were central to Love's nomination in 2012. Those close to her campaign admitted that her opponent, Carl Wimmer, was the early favorite for the nomination in 2012, and drew much of his support from the same pool of delegates behind Bennett's 2010 loss. But with a more pro-Hatch, pro-Mormon pool of delegates, Love, the more moderate candidate who was also a member of the Church of Latter-day Saints, became the candidate to beat. While they stressed that Love had a path to victory regardless – she held numerous one-on-one meetings with delegates, was a charismatic speaker, and because of her race had garnered national media attention – they also admitted that after the influx of Hatch supporters her polling among convention delegates increased nearly 10 points. Love eventually won 53% of delegates on the first ballot among the five candidates. The three bottom placing candidates all dropped out and endorsed Love, and she was able to win the nomination with 70% of the convention delegates.

In states with party conventions, the party still has the formal ability to select their nominee. In terms of resources that can benefit a candidate's pursuit of nomination, these formal powers can't be beat. In these examples, the networks of supporters behind a candidate always win.

3.3.2 'Firehouse' Primaries

In Virginia, political parties have the ability to select the method by which the choose their nominees on a race-by-race and cycle-by-cycle basis. For example, for Congress, the Virginia Republican Party is divided into 11 districts. Each district has an executive committee that consists of an elected chair, members of the state committee, and representatives of local Republican organizations. In the 10th district this includes a chairman, five state committee members, and one representative from the college Republicans, the young Republicans, and the district federation of Republican women. These individuals can vote to hold

a state primary, a party canvass, a mass meeting, or a convention to select their nominees.

For example, while the state GOP selected their gubernatorial nominee, Ken Cuccinelli by convention in 2013, they selected their 2017 nominee, Ed Gillespie, in a state run primary. The choice is often a political one. Conventions tend to "attract the party's most ardent conservatives," where a "primary, because it is extended and draws a larger electorate – including Democrats, Republicans and independents – favors well-financed establishment candidates" (Schwartzman 2015). This ability to chose their nominating procedures gives the formal party organizations within each individual district the potential to benefit different types of candidates in different races.

A method unique to Virginia, the 'Firehouse Primary' or party canvass, was used to select the nominee for the open 10th district contest in 2014. A party canvass is a primary election run by party officials and volunteers, rather than the state. Beau Correll, chair of a local county Republican committee, described it as "a middle ground between a convention or a conventional primary" (Badcock 2014). Because the primary is run by the party, they can choose where, when, and how many polling stations will be used. For example, the 10th district 'firehouse' primary had 10 polling locations across the district (Olivo 2014), whereas Loudon County – the largest county entirely within the 10th district – alone has 96 polling locations in a normal election (Loudon County 2018). Additionally, whereas Virginia has an open primary system, allowing potential out-party participation, parties can require a loyalty pledge from voters under this system. As John Whitebeck, chair of the districts Republican committee described, "[w]e set up voting locations around the district, and as long as you're a registered voter who's willing to sign a statement confirming that you're going to support the Republican nominee, you can vote in the process" (Badcock 2014).

The more moderate faction of the party preferred the eventual-nominee Barbara Comstock. She had endorsements from members of the 10th district Republican committee and the chairman of the state party. The 10th district committee was also considered to be a more pro-establishment committee than the statewide party which had more Tea Party support. Dody Stottlemyer, president of a local Tea Party network, said that she was clearly "the establishment candidate" (Pershing 2014), a label used in many of our interviews to

describe Comstock. One local pro-life activist reported that her main opponent, Bob Marshall, was "more outspoken and ha[d] a longer track record" on conservative causes, and was "certainly not a member of the establishment." He was in many ways "Tea Party before the Tea Party" (POG 2014).

Media coverage and local experts were divided over whether the decision to use a 'firehouse' primary in the 10th district was to prevent a more conservative state convention from supporting a more extreme candidate who would be less viable in the general election or was simply a matter of practicality. Some party officials we spoke to said that candidates who performed worse in the primary had been advocating for a convention since it was their only viable path to victory. One local activist mentioned how the primary system with plurality rule benefited Comstock, as there would likely be a majority of more ardent Tea Party supporters at the convention, even if there was not a majority for any one particular Tea Party candidate. But a state party official was confident that Comstock would have won under any circumstance, but that the party canvass method would give the party more control while preventing criticisms of a closed-party process (ibid.).

There is some evidence that the party canvass was designed to help the party establishment. The choice of which polling locations to use is a choice to determine which voters will be convenienced and inconvenienced by the process. In the 10th district, the selection of the particular canvass locations was biased against Tea Party voters. By way of background, in the previous election cycle, former Senator George Allen sought to reclaim his U.S. Senate seat when Senator Jim Webb announced his retirement. While he won the nomination by a comfortable margin – 66% of the vote in a four person primary – President of the Richmond Tea Party and co-founder of the Virginia Tea Party Patriots Federation Jamie Radke won 23% of the vote statewide, a figure that far exceeded expectations set by public polling (WaPo Poll 2012). Figure 3.2 maps Radke's vote share by precinct in Virginia's 10th district, and also plots the locations chosen by the 10th district Republican committee for the 2014. The average precinct with a canvass location cast 16.2% of their ballots for the Tea Party candidate, in comparison to the district at large which cast 19.5% of their ballots in support of Radke – a statistically significant bias against Tea Party supporting precincts. If

the committee were randomly selecting polling locations from all available polling locations in the district, we would expect this degree of pro-establishment bias to occur only around 8% of the time.[6] Admittedly, this evidence is only suggestive. However, whether the selection of the locations was done intentionally or coincidentally, and whether the benefit was determinative or not, it was an available tool for the party to use in benefit of her campaign.

Figure 3.2: Canvass Locations in Virginia's 10th District Republican Primary
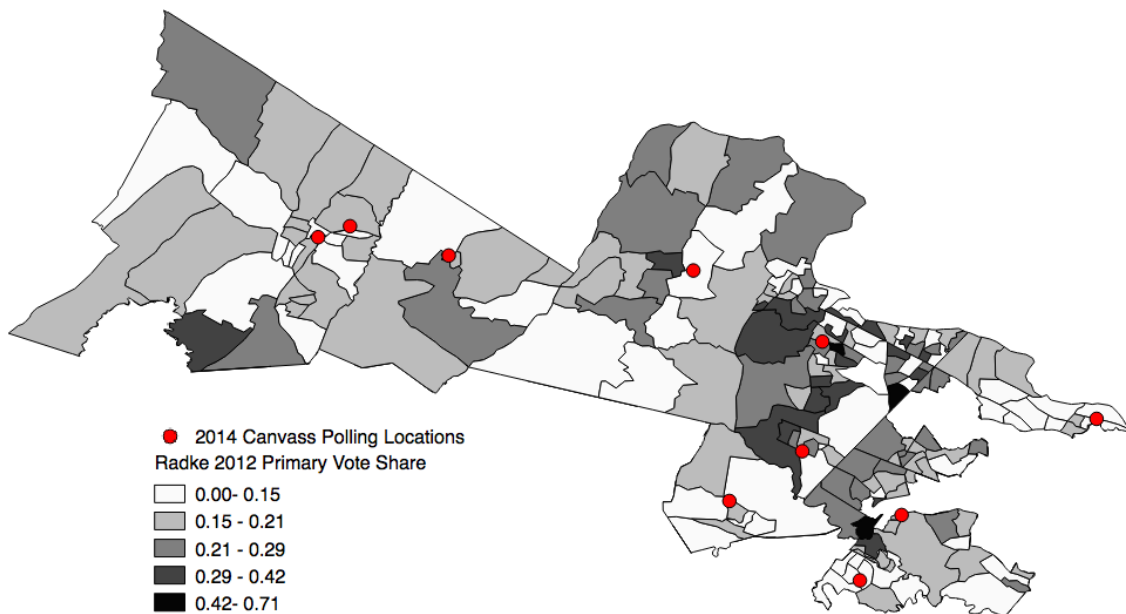
Taken together, Comstock's network of establishment supporters – those officials in charge of deciding how the party will select it's nominee – whether intentionally or not, helped

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[6]The difference in Radke's primary vote share between precincts with canvass locations and those without is statistically significant under a Welch two sample t-test (p≈ 0.013). Using 100,000 simulated draws from the list of 210 potential polling locations within the district, I find only 8.22% of draws with Radke's average less than or equal to the 16.2% observed. Geocoding of the polling locations was conducted using the Google Maps API and the geo-spacial subsetting was conducted using QGIS. Using the number of potential polling locations accounts for variations in population, as precincts with more polling locations are those with larger voting populations.

create an electoral environment more favorable to their chosen candidate. They designed a party canvass requiring voters from areas with larger concentrations of Tea Party support to travel further and use polling locations different from their usual location. Both of these factors could have easily benefited Comstock on the margins. And these are the decisions we can easily observe. For example, there were 10 locations in the firehouse primary, but party rules only dictate that each electoral unit has one location. Why then were Loudon and Fairfax counties given multiple locations? Any explanation would, at this point, be speculation. But regardless of whether that tool *was* used to support Comstock's particular nomination, it is sufficient to note the rang of resources Comstock's establishment network *could* have used if circumstances demanded.

3.3.3   The County Line

In New Jersey, the county party's endorsement is *key* to nomination. Before I could ask my first question in regards to the Democratic primary in New Jersey's 1st district, a political consultant declared that "the most important thing to keep in mind for New Jersey primary politics is the case *Lautenberg v. Kelly.*" He went on to explain how this court case allowed county parties to start placing statewide office seekers at the top of the 'party line' and not in a separate column. Befuddled, I asked "umm...what is the party line?" He laughed. "Oh, you *really* don't know Jersey" (POG 2014).

The "party line" in New Jersey is the preferential ballot placement that comes with the endorsement of the county party organization. Figure 3.3 provides a sample ballot from the 2014 Democratic Primary in Mercer and Middlesex counties. In Column A, voters can find the county's "slate" – the candidates who are running with the county endorsement, or have been given "the county line." In Middlesex County, Linda Greenstein won the endorsement of the county party, whereas Bonnie Watson Coleman did so in her home county of Mercer. The advantage to the line comes predominantly from the ballot design. Candidate's in full columns simply "look like they belong there," and are more likely to be selected, all else equal. Some counties also identify that column separately, as Burlington County does with

Figure 3.3: Sample Ballots from New Jersey's 12th District Democratic Primary

the label "Burlington County Regular Democrats." Following *Lautenberg v. Kelly* (1994), the top of these columns were headed by the endorsed candidates for statewide office, which added the value of higher name recognition to the county line. While this process ostensibly leaves the power of nominations in the hands of voters, those interviewed could only recall two or three instances ever in which a candidate won a primary "off the line," and my own research nominations could find no such exceptions for congressional primaries.

The county line was critical in securing the party's nomination in the open-seat contests in the 2014 cycle. When Representative Rush Holt announced that he would not seek reelection to New Jersey's heavily Democratic 12th district in 2014, four candidates quickly filed to run for the Democratic nomination: State Sen. Linda Greenstein, State Rep. Upendra Chivukula, State Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, and Princeton Physicist Andrew Zwicker. Greenstein, Chivukula, and Watson Coleman were each endorsed by their home county's Democratic party. On March 11, 2014, the three major candidates all met at Giovanna's Restaurant in Plainfield, NJ to meet with the Democratic chairpeople of the three Union County towns in the 12th District – Assemblyman Jerry Green, Mayor Colleen Mahr, and Assemblywoman Linda Stender (Spoto 2014). In a private room in this Italian Restaurant the three party leaders decided to endorse Watson Coleman. She would go on to win the nomination in no small part due to her 76% of the vote from Union County. Table 3.1 presents the county-level results for that contest, as well as the counterfactual in which Greenstein had performed as well as Watson Coleman in Union County. It is not inconceivable that the Union County endorsement determined the outcome of this race.

Table 3.1: County Results in New Jersey's 12th District Democratic Primary

County	Watson Coleman	Greenstein	Chivukula	Zwicker
Mercer	**10,908**	2,837	1,693	1,648
Middlesex	772	**6,466**	2,789	708
Somerset	790	418	**2,923**	169
Union	3,133	368	485	143
Total	15,603	10,089	7,890	2,668
Counterfactual	12,838	12,854	–	–

3.3.4 The Party's Primary

In his book *The Party's Primary*, Hassell questions the conventional wisdom that the national political parties are not influential in congressional primary contests. As institutions they lack the formal powers of their local counterparts and rarely make endorsements to avoid alienating potential supporters. But the party still has an interest in supporting nominees that will further it's goals, so "the party network needs a means to coordinate its efforts" in support of particular candidates (2018). The national party, he argues, as the center of this networks (Herrnson 2009; Koger, Masket, Noel 2008; 2009) can direct donors and interest groups toward their preferred nominee – funnelling resources to aid their preferred candidates' pursuit of the nomination.

These dynamics were on clear display in Colorado's 4th district Republican primary. In 2010 Ken Buck's U.S. Senate campaign was marred by controversy over his previous role in a rape case as Weld County District Attorney. When he decided not to prosecute the case, he told the victim that "a jury could very well conclude that this is a case of buyer's remorse" (Waddingham 2010). He was also branded as "too extreme for Colorado," supporting the repeal of the 17th Amendment – the direct election of senators – and laws prohibiting abortion even in cases of rape and incest (Brady 2010). This loss, like those in Delaware and Nevada, was seen by the national party as an unforced error in a cycle where Republicans were generally successful.

National party leaders were eager to avoid another unnecessary defeat four years later. In another election cycle that looked to benefit Republicans nationwide, the national party hoped to find a more "electable" candidate for the general election. Buck's decision to try once more for a U.S. Senate seat complicated these efforts. With his wide name recognition and strong support in many Tea Party circles, beating him in a primary would be difficult and expensive. Insiders disagree as to the exact origin of the idea, but when 4th District Congressman Corey Gardner entered the primary race for Senate, Buck dropped out and ran for Gardner's now open seat. Each then immediately endorsed the other's campaign. This "switcheroo" would give the party a stronger general election candidate for the Senate

contest and wouldn't endanger the heavily Republican 4th district (Hohmann et al. 2014).

Figure 3.4: Overlap in Donors between Ken Buck, Corey Garnder, and the RNC
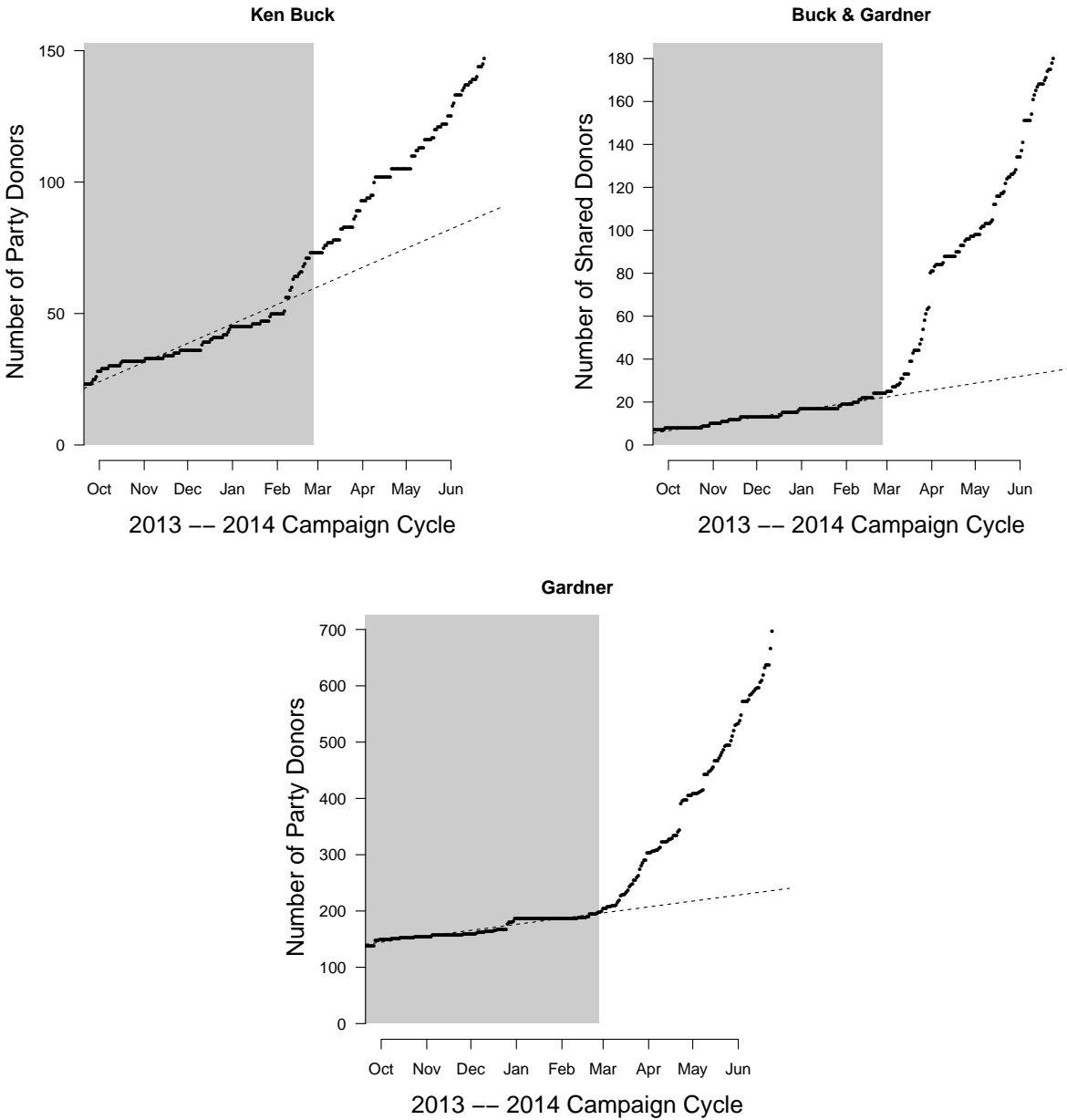
Note: Panel 1 provides the number of donors Ken Buck shared with the national party's fundraising committees over the course of the campaign. The greyed area is the period before the "switcheroo." The dotted line is a linear projection based on the rate prior to the switch. Panel 2 provides a similar plot, but with the number of donors Ken Buck shared with Corey Gardner's campaign. Similarly, Panel 3 provides Gardner's number of party donors across the primary cycle.

Regardless of who approached who with the idea for the candidate swap, it was orchestrated and financially supported by the national party. RNC Chairman Reince Priebus publicly disclosed that discussions between the two campaigns had been going on for weeks, and much of the political coverage of the switch referenced the major role that prominent national Republican strategist Karl Rove played in pressuring Buck to agree to the switch (Pols 2014b). Figure 3.4 provides some initial evidence that the party did in fact move behind and support Buck once he shifted to the House contest. The first figure plots the cumulative number of donors that contributed to the Buck campaign who also contributed to one of the national Republican fundraising committees – the RNC, RSCC, or RCCC. The second figure shows the cumulative number of donors that contributed to both Gardner and Buck's campaign. The grayed areas are the time during which Buck was running for the Senate seat, and the dotted lines are a linear projection based solely on rate of donors prior to the switch. As a result of the switch, Buck's campaign began to receive the support from significantly more national donors – a support network that increasingly overlapped with that of Gardner. Importantly, the shift in national donors appears to begin just *before* details of the switch went public, supporting Preibus's claim that these efforts began behind the scenes prior to the announcement. While these data alone are somewhat speculative, they conform to insider reports that the national party moved behind Buck to encourage him to switch to the House contest. In sum, following the switch, the national party came to support Buck's candidacy in the contested 4th district primary and Corey Gardner's campaign.

The increase in Ken Buck's number of national party donors in the first week after the switch (+10) was greater than the total number of national party donations any of his house primary opponents received during the duration of the primary. The shift toward Buck by national party donors is important as it signals that the national parties are still able to marshal important resource networks behind their chosen candidates and are not simply the falling in line behind the presumptive nominee. The national party had no fear of losing the 4th district in the general election, and would have been well represented by any of Buck's 4th district opponents. If anything, his opponents had less electoral baggage and weren't subject to the criticisms of the switching "back room deal" (Fasano 2014). But

in exchange for assisting their preferred Senate contest, the party was willing to expend it's scares resources – campaign donations and endorsements – to help nominate Buck.

3.3.5 Party Capture and the Formal Powers of Local Organizations

It could be tempting to view these as instances in which networks of support had little sway over the outcome of the nominations. Love's ability to win the nomination in Utah could have simply come from her abilities to persuade delegates. Watson Coleman's charm could have allowed her to win over the Union County committee. Comstock's talents as a politician and fundraiser could have convinced the formal party to get behind her. These could easily be viewed as textbook examples of the candidate-centered parties that are "maintained, used or abused, reformed or ignored" when doing so furthers the goals of politicians and ambitious office-seekers (Aldrich 1995 p.4; see Schwartz 1989). However, when the formal party holds such significant influence over the process, it provides ample incentive to seek control over that party's formal apparatus. When these organized interests gain sufficient control to use the party's levers of power to their own advantage, the parties are essentially "captured" by the network. Two noteworthy examples of party capture – the trade unions in the Democratic Party in southern New Jersey and the Tea Party in the Virginia state Republican Party – factored heavily into nomination contests in those states and suggest that even in these states with formal party powers, the networks of supporters behind the party are critical.

3.3.5.1 An Electrician with a Tie

Within moments of Representative Rob Andrew's retirement announcement, State Senator Donald Norcross announced his own intentions to seek the Democratic nomination for the first district of New Jersey with the endorsement of dozens of local, county, and state officials, including Senators Bob Menendez and Corey Booker, Congressmen Pallone, Andrews, Sires, Pascrell, Holt, and Payne – the entirety of the state's federal Democratic delegation (PolitickerNJ 2014). This overwhelming show of support was in no small part driven by

George Norcross, the undisputed boss of South Jersey's Democratic Party. To describe his influence, one *Republican* operative confessed

> "People joke around about Hague, and some of the other classic New Jersey Bosses, that everyone says during his time period in Hudson County, Hague was the boss of all bosses, ya know, you see Boardwalk Empire, and that's based on a true character...but George [Norcross] probably is the best and the greatest one of all time. He's taken it to a level those guys never could have dreamed it could go. And I'm not talking about illegal stuff, just how his power, his strength, getting stuff done, and also just the money...the money he raises is beyond anything anyone in Jersey has ever seen...he's impossible to beat, and when he's personally involved like this [referring to his brother's Congressional campaign], I *truly mean impossible* to beat" (POG 2014).

A piece in *Philadelphia Magazine* described the reach of his influence:

> "Norcross holds unshakable influence over offices from the mayor of Collingswood to the Camden County freeholders to the state senate. Within New Jersey, he boasts true omnipotence – his alliances with North Jersey Democrats are so strong that no governor can ignore his wants, and he is second only to Governor Chris Christie in terms of influence" (Volk 2013).

According to a senior political consultant for the Camden County Democratic party, the political influence of the Norcross family is not limited to George "Donald is a player in his own right." In a much more behind the scenes fashion, Donald Norcross has been a crucial player in merging the South Jersey labor movement and the Democratic Party into a single force. "Donald is the union movement," and as a result of his efforts and organizing "the union movement and the Democratic Party are now often one and the same" (POG 2014).

Donald Norcross began his professional career as a union electrician. He would rise through the ranks and go on to serve as the president of the South New Jersey Branch of the AFL-CIO's Central Labor Council, and has spent the last 15 years working for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), most recently serving as the assistant business manager of IBEW Local 351. Norcross is most known for his work bridging the efforts of public service charities and union organizations.

One program that Norcross was instrumental in bringing to New Jersey was the 2-1-1 initiative – a state program to help connect the public with government and private resource services. Norcross's work on this program established beneficial relationships between the trade unions, the charitable organizations, and the community, while also building both his reputation and network of supporters and allies.

Potential candidates frequently sought his advice when seeking office and members of the legislature would seek his advice when considering legislation. Through these interactions, Norcross realized that too few members of the unions were represented in local planning boards, public works commissions, and county offices, and began recruiting members of the trade unions to seek these offices. "He would sit at a diner all day making his pitch to potential candidates," and through the years brought enough trade union members into the process to make them *the* central players in the Democratic party (POG 2014).

One such candidate Norcross recruited was his family friend and member of the local ironworkers union, Stephen Sweeney, who Norcross convinced and supported in his run for the Gloucester County Board of Freeholders. Now the President of the New Jersey Senate, Sweeney is one of the most influential policy makers in the Garden State. His first run for the State Senate was the most expensive state legislative race in New Jersey history, costing nearly $2.4 million (Smith 2007). Much of Sweeney's fundraising strength and his eventual victory are often attributed to George Norcross's political machine, but it was Donald behind the scenes pushing trade union workers to run for office that brought Sweeney into the electoral arena.

Donald and George's work built the unions into the most influential group in New Jersey Democratic politics. Donald forced labor to the center of the Democratic party by directly recruiting and supporting union members and labor supporters pursuing office, and George used his fundraising strength to make sure that these candidates were successful. For example: "[George Norcross] raised $2 million, for the 2003 state senate race that installed unknown challenger [and police union member] Fred Madden over Republican incumbent George Geist" in the most expensive state legislative race in Jersey history (Volk 2013).

When State Assembly Speaker Joe Roberts decided to retire, he approached Donald Norcross, so often the recruiter, and convinced him to run for the seat in the Assembly. Roberts was renominated for the office in the primary, but then announced that he would not seek re-election in the general election. This allowed the party organization to select a replacement candidate for the general election. Considering the number of members of the committee that Norcross had originally recruited to get involved, and the influence his brother's fundraising ability still had over the organization, Donald getting on the ballot was no more difficult than signaling that he was interested in the position. In the same general election, 5th district State Senator Dana Reed was elected Mayor of Camden, creating another vacancy, which the party then decided to fill with...Donald Norcross.

Five years later, at his congressional campaign launch, Norcross declared that he was "an electrician with a tie," running "because South Jersey needs to continue to have an effective advocate" in Washington (Arco 2014). His close ties with the labor movement were on full display. The Senate President Sweeney was on hand to endorse Norcross at the announcement event. "Donald is a true champion of the people, [and] one of us," said Sweeney. "I cant believe an ironworker is saying such nice things about an electrician," he joked as a childhood friend of the Norcross family. Sweeney went on to say, "but it's time we send a union electrician to Washington" (Caffrey 2014).

While Logan Township Mayor Frank Minor competed in the primary, Norcross won the Camden County party endorsement, the support of dozens of local elected official, the Democratic nomination with five times as many votes as his nearest opponent, and the general election with ease. It is difficult to disaggregate the impact of the party line from the support of the larger Norcross operation, but these forces are far from independent. The support of the Norcross machine secured him the support of the formal party. When I asked someone familiar the Camden County endorsement how they decided to endorse Norcross, he just looked over his glasses and laughed. Through years of organizing union candidates, the Norcross family had created an unbeatable party organization in which "Democrat" and "Union" were essentially synonymous.

3.3.5.2 The Most Powerful Man You've Never Heard Of

Russ Moulton, the leader of the grassroots conservative wing of the Virginia Republican Party – the Conservative Fellowship – has been described as "the most powerful man in Virginia you've never heard of" (Martin 2015). Moulton

> "shares his beliefs with his conservative network through e-mail, chiding such Republicans as [former] House of Delegates Speaker William J. Howell for supporting a tax increase that 'destroyed our brand.' In one e-mail, he warned legislators they'd be 'Cantor'd!' if they didn't oppose Virginia's same-sex marriage law...The way to 'save our Republic,' he wrote, is 'conservatives organizing precinct-by-precinct, and seat-by-seat'." (Schwartzman 2015).

Moulton was instrumental in organizing the Tea Party takeover of the Virginia Republican Party. During the 2009 gubernatorial primary, Lt. Governor Bill Bolling agreed to support the establishment candidate Bob McDonnell's candidacy under the condition that he supported Bolling to replace him in 2013. Moulton, however, preferred a more conservative alternative to Bolling. Moulton used this local activist strategy to seize control of the Virginia Republican Party. He and his network supported thirteen candidates to run for internal party elections across the state. Twelve of these "conservative grass-roots and tea party activists" candidates won against candidates from the "establishment wing," giving Moulton's Fellowship a majority of seats on the state committee (Nolan 2016).

A state primary is organized and run by state government as with most other states. Virginia, however, does not have voter party registration, and concerns about Democrats participating in Republican primaries and the lack of control for party officials causes party leaders to often look elsewhere. A party canvass, or a "firehouse" primary, is a private primary run by the party in which any voter who signs a statement of intent to vote Republican can participate. A mass meeting is similar to a traditional convention, but it is open to anyone in the district who wishes to attend – these are often avoided because of the logistical difficulties. Finally, parties can opt to use political conventions in which each county and municipality elects and sends delegates to a state convention to choose nominees.

Moulton hoped to use this new control over the party organization to conduct conventions rather than primaries for choosing Republican nominees. Conventions tend to "attract the party's most ardent conservatives," where a "primary, because it is extended and draws a larger electorate including Democrats, Republicans and independents – favors well-financed establishment candidates" (Schwartzman 2015). Moulton's new Fellowship majority reversed the decision to hold a gubernatorial primary – disadvantaging Bolling who hoped to mirror McDonnell's electoral strategy. Instead, Ken Cuccinelli, a close Moulton ally, won the Republican nomination at the party's convention.

Cuccinelli's convention win and general election loss was taken by establishment Republicans as evidence that the convention strategy was a not in the party's best interest. Using Moulton's own playbook against him, the more establishment faction of the party regained a one seat majority on the state committee in 2016. By a 41-40 vote, "the GOP's State Central Committee effectively upended a compromise agreement reached last year by factions within the state party that called for a primary in the 2016 race for president to be followed by a nominating convention for statewide offices in 2017" and "voted to select their 2017 statewide candidates in a primary rather than at a convention" (Nolan 2016).

These dynamics are currently playing out in Virginia's 6th congressional district. After Eric Cantor's surprising 2014 primary defeat, establishment candidates became increasingly hesitant to put their electoral fate in the hands of primary voters. The 6th district's party committee voted to hold a convention to choose the 2018 nominee to replace retiring Rep. Bob Goodlatte, but only knowing that the majority of delegates supported the establishment faction. "That was until the committee decided the nominee would be chosen by a plurality of the vote rather than a majority," which the establishment candidate, Ben Cline, complained was an attempt "to rig the convention to help their chosen candidate because they do not believe their candidate of choice is strong enough to win a majority of delegates under the standard Convention rules" (Leahy 2018). By relaxing the requirement that a candidate be nominated by a majority of delegates, Tea Party supporters hope to put their thumb on the scale for the more conservative candidate, Virginia's GOP national committeewoman, Cynthia Dunbar.

The amount of influence the method of selecting nominees has over the outcome of particular contests provides organized interests with ample incentive to attempt to control the formal party organizations in Virginia. The Tea Party and establishment factions of the Republican Party have become well aware of this dynamic, and have increasingly taken to competing in internal party elections to help control the levers of party power. While the particular faction in control has varied from cycle to cycle lately, this has not stopped ideologically motivated networks of supporters from "capturing" the parties to further their goals.

3.4   Candidate-Centered Informal Party Networks

In Masket's overview of five party networks in California, he noted that "officehold-ers...are often the builders of and top players in [informal party organizations]...They provide much of the effort to forge alliance with other officeholders and to get their own proteges elected" (2009, p. 129). We observed a similar dynamic in some 2014 primary races, with regional elected officials playing central roles in the recruitment, dissuasion, and support of candidates in primary elections. In Michigan's 4th district, Bill Schuette's political network was seen as critical to overcoming the wide name recognition and self-fundraising abilities of an outsider candidate, while in North Carolina's 12th district, the atrophy of Charlotte's Democratic establishment allowed for an outsider candidate to succeed in a crowded field.

3.4.1   Bill Schuette's 'Midland Team'

Bill Schuette has been a major player in Michigan Republican politics for the past thirty-five years. First elected to Congress in 1984 at the age of 31, he served three terms before unsuccessfully challenging incumbent Democrat, Carl Levin, in the 1990 Senate election. Fellow Republican and then-Governor John Engler then appointed Schuette to head the Michigan Department of Agriculture, where her served until running for the Michigan State Senate in 1994, where he served until 2003. From here he was elected to the Michigan 4th District Court of Appeals, until he was chosen by the Michigan Republican convention as

their nominee for state Attorney General in 2010. When he sought re-election to the position in 2014, he had represented some portion of Michigan's current 4th congressional district continuously for nearly 30 years.

When Schuette decided to challenge Levin for the Senate seat in 1990, he encouraged Dave Camp to run to replace him in Congress. Before serving as Schuette's chief of staff, Camp served on the Midland County Board of Canvassers and was a member of the Midland County Republican Committee, and had served one term in the Michigan House of Representatives. In the Republican primary his major opponents consisted of former congressman James Dunn, and former state legislators Alan Cropsey and Richard Allen. Despite trailing Dunn in early polls, Camp won the Republican primary with a plurality of 33%, which sources attributed largely to the support of Schuette. He went on to win the general election easily.

Since 1990, Schuette and Camp have built an impressive grassroots Republican machine based out of their home county of Midland. As one Schuette associate put it:

> "The 4th district, from a party stand point, has always been controlled by the alliance of Dave Camp...and Bill Schuette...They have built a strong grassroots operation throughout the district...They know who the activists are, who to put into different places, and who to talk to in order to get things done...they were trusted in the district...if they said this is our guy, then people would say 'if Dave Camp likes him, then he must be the right one"' (POG 2014).

They built this machine slowly over the years by tending to and fostering relationships among Midland County elected Republicans and the major business interests in the district, particularly Dow Chemical. Bill Schuette would hold townhall-style meetings where business leaders, local officials, and activists could come and ask him questions while he poured them coffee. He was a central player in organizing the "4th District Round-up" – an annual dinner hosted by Schuette on behalf of Camp to bring together the various party officials and activists to continue to foster those relationships.

But those we interviewed were quick to point out that this machine was not "like Tammany Hall or anything untoward," simply the bi-product of years of "relationships"

reinforced by cooperation on "many projects for the district." That said, political consultants "call it a machine, because when it comes to convention politics...if we want the 4th district to be locked up, we get Schuette's blessing" (POG 2014).

Realizing, as one campaign adviser put it, "the importance of keeping this a Midland seat," Schuette again took an active role in supporting a Midland County based nominee when Camp decided to retire in 2014. As he described:

> "Between Bill [Schuette] and Dave [Camp] there was a sense that it's nice to have someone from Midland, who knows the concerns of Midland, who will keep an eye out for Midland, who's going to make sure that Midland's best interests are looked after first and foremost, because that's the hometown team.

> We want someone who is going to make sure that Midland gets its fair share, whether that is highway funds, new exchanges, pilot projects to fix infrastructure, maybe tax changes. [Who will consider] what that will do to the biggest employer in town ...if Dow sneezes, Midland County catches a cold" (ibid.).

The obvious choice was John Moolenaar, the state senator representing a large chunk of the district and a former Dow Chemical Company chemist. Moolenaar had been a part of the "Midland Team" for many years.

> "Politically, the 4th district is a tight district. Everybody knows everybody. And Bill Schuette was friends with everybody. Dave Camp was friends with everybody. [John] Moolenaar was friends with everybody. So there was a built in network that he could tap into...

> We all knew Moolenar, because he had a long history. He had been state rep. He had been state senator. He was a longtime activist in the party. My wife knew John going back to the Headlee [gubernatorial] campaign going back to 1982. What's that like 35 years we've known John? John was just a known quantity" (ibid.).

But Schuette and Moolenaar had to overcome one obstacle between them and the nomination: the self-financing former Ross Education CEO, Paul Mitchell. While Mitchell had no elected experience, it would have been difficult if not impossible to compete with Mitchell on the airwaves given the $3.5 million dollars he loaned his campaign. And this disadvantage

kept Moolenaar as the underdog for the bulk of the campaign – early public polling had Paul Mitchell at 50% to Moolenaar's 23% (Roelofs 2014). So

> "they got a bus, some sort of vehicle or RV...and they hit all the high points, the bars, restaurants, attractions in the 4th district. Bill knows the district like the back of his hand...he's represented it by and large his whole life, whether as a Congressman, or a state senator, certainly as a judge, and now as Attorney General he has the whole state as part of his portfolio...he knows the 4th district backwards and forwards, all the coffee shops and gathering spots where people get together to talk about politics...and that's where you want to take your candidate...like Don's in Mt. Pleasant and Pizza Sam's and Charlene's in Midland...each community has one of these places, and that's what Bill was very good at..."

> "Moolenaar did not have the money that his primary opponent did. We needed to counteract that with something else. Bill [Schuette] felt that we could have a better ground game, a more localized ground game, with more local support for John [Moolenaar]...John and Bill had more long standing relationships in the community...so we could better capitalize on that and go to these local communities..." (POG 2014).

This description may falsely convey an image of some sort of shoe-string operation. Between independent expenditures made on Moolenaar's behalf and the expenditures of his own campaign, over $1 million dollars went toward securing him the nomination. Importantly, most of this money came from the "Midland Team" network. Of those itemized contributions made to Moolenaar during the primary, more than 52% (253/489) had previously contributed to one of Bill Schuette's campaigns (Bonica 2015, MI SOS 2018). 36% (174/489) of these donors had contributed to Schuette *before* he was elected Attorney General. And about 10% (45/489) had been consistently active in the network back to David Camp's 1990 primary campaign, including Dow Chemical Presidents Paul Oreffice and Macauley Whiting, The Michigan Farm Bureau, Midland Cogeneration Venture CEO Rodney Boulanger, the Narton Corporation Chairman Norman Rautiola, Midland County GOP Chair Judy Rapanos, and of course, Bill Schuette.

It was Schuette's network that allowed Moolenaar to overcome his financial disadvantages and win the primary. By tapping into this network, Moolenaar had access to endorse-

ments, campaign contributions, and a grassroots network of supporters that allowed him to compete with Paul Mitchell. Initially down in the polls and considerably outspent, it would be a mistake to conclude that this result was preordained, or that this network was simply falling in line behind the eventual nominee. It was the network marshaling powerful resources behind their candidate that allowed Moolenaar to win the nomination.

3.4.2 Charlotte's Empty Bench

Politician-centered networks also featured prominently in Democratic nominations, but the most informative example of their influence came in the form of a network's failure. Through a series of retirements and federal appointments, the bench of African-American politicians in Charlotte, North Carolina emptied too quickly for new leadership to emerge. As a result, they lacked the structure necessary coalesce around one candidate, which allowed a candidate from outside the city, Alma Adams of Greensboro, to take the seat.

On January 17, 2014, Charlotte gathered to mourn the loss of civil rights icon, Franklin McCain. McCain had been one of the four North Carolina A & T students who staged the famous sit-in at a whites-only lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina (Morrill 2014). Sadly, this was the second time in recent months that Charlotte had come together to bury one of its heroes. Only four months prior, the community lost Julius Chambers, a civil rights lawyer instrumental in many of the Supreme Court victories surrounding desegregation, school busing, and employment discrimination. Sitting in the pews for the service sat his numerous proteges and partners: Former Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt, prominent civil rights James Ferguson, Former Representative and FHFA Director Mel Watt, Former Mayor and Current U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, and city councilman James Mitchell.

All of these men stood as monumental figures in their own right. Mayor Gantt was the first African-American mayor of Charlotte, ran for the Senate twice in campaigns against Jesse Helms, and serves as a "father figure" to both the Democratic establishment and the city at large (POG 2014). His Senate campaigns, some of the earliest competitive state

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wide races made by an African-American candidate, would inspire countless young African Americans to pursue careers in public service and elected office, including a then Harvard law student, Barack Obama. James Ferguson, a partner with Julius Chambers at the prominent law firm Ferguson, Chambers, and Sumter, had a reputation both in the Charlotte and legal communities second to none. Among their more illustrious proteges, Representative Mel Watt, or "Mel, just Mel," as he's known in the district, was the first congressman to represent the newly created district and developed such a reputation for gravitas and leadership that many people I interviewed referred to him simply as "the man." Anthony Foxx had distinguished himself during his tenure on the city council and as mayor as a rising Democratic star, and was widely viewed as the heir-apparent to replace Watt were he to retire or seek another office.

While activist networks in most congressional districts are often small and tightly knit communities, in North Carolina's 12th district, political power remained in the hands of individuals with deeply personal connections. Watt and Ferguson worked at the same law firm, and Watt and Gantt were next-door neighbors. All three were close family friends. Anthony Foxx's grandfather was Gantt's political mentor, and was himself almost an "adoptive son" of Mel Watt. From the mayor's office to Congress, from city council to planning the 2012 DNC convention, Democratic politics in Charlotte was a family affair. As Jim Morrill (2012), the long-time political reporter for *The Charlotte Observer*, writes:

> 'Like Gantt, Ferguson and Watt had been part of a new generation of black professionals in Charlotte. The three became good friends. So did their kids. Watt and Gantt even lived side by side...Sometimes the historical continuum ran through their kitchens...Their kids hung out at each other's homes. They went to good colleges. They played tennis on the backyard court Gantt and Watt shared...And since elementary school the kids counted in their group a friend named Anthony Foxx, whose grandfather, James Foxx, had been Gantt's own political mentor...Anthony Foxx would go on to the city council in 2005. Two years later he confided to Gantt that he wanted to run for mayor. And when he did in 2009, it was in Gantt's living room that he sought advice. 'Harvey blazed a trail for a lot of people including me,' Foxx says. 'The great advantage I have...that he didn't have is I have him'."

The first generation of African-American political leaders helped revitalized Charlotte,

and North Carolina more generally, into a region rich in political and economic energy. They broke down many of the racial barriers and built up a legal community to provide starts for many African-American lawyers and public servants – Gantt, Watt, and Foxx among the most illustrious examples. Given how few African Americans are elected to statewide office, a congressional seats and mayorships are often considered the "crown jewels" for black politicians. One House Democrat confided that "[b]efore Barack Obama, if you were elected to Congress, it was like being a king, African-Americans weren't elected as senator or governor. So you had to be mayor or a [House] member. That was the pinnacle of power" (Bresnahan 2014). From these position of influence, Gantt and Watt held tremendous influence over Democractic politics in the region.

But by early 2014, however, this second generation had begun taking a step back from the city it helped build. Mayor Gantt has increasingly taken a less active role in politics, and his influence was less pronounced – his endorsed candidate, James Mitchell, lost the primary for mayor just the year before. Mel Watt, the only congressman the 12th district has ever known, and the "reigning king" of Charlotte for the past 20 years, was nominated by President Obama to serve as the Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency. His "heir apparent," the individual most assumed would run for Watt's seat upon his retirement, Mayor Anthony Foxx, was also nominated by the Obama Administration to serve as his Secretary of Transportation. With these two appointments in particular, Charlotte and the 12th Congressional District, lost the bulk of its political leadership, creating a vacuum in the political hierarchy of the region that the next generation of leaders was eager to fill. As one local official noted:

> "For years and years you've had a certain group that are known to be the power players...but that's changing...kid's today don't know who Julius Chambers is...it wasn't passed on to the next generation, and so now there is a generational gap in that leadership (POG 2014)."

Without the guiding hand of these political leaders, there was nothing short of a free-for-all for the Democratic nomination. Seven Democrats filed to run for the open seat, four of whom hailed from Charlotte. This does not take into consideration the four or five other

candidates who had publicly explored making a run for the office. Two candidates vying for the seat, Curtis Osborne and Rajive Patel, were not considered "serious candidates" by anyone interviewed, but the remaining five all had reason to believe they could be the next Mel Watt.

In a crowded field of five credible candidates, three came from the Charlotte: George Battle, Malcolm Graham, and James Mitchell. Formerly associate general counsel for Carolinas Healthcare System, Battle was currently serving as the general counsel for the Charlotte Mecklenburg School Board when he announced his candidacy. Having never been elected to prior office, Battle positioned himself to run as an outsider with experience in education – an issue every interviewee noted would be particularly important in this race. Battle's greatest strength came from the name recognition he enjoyed courtesy of his father. As the Bishop of the AME Zion church, George Battle, Jr. was very well known throughout the district.

The initial frontrunner from the Charlotte area was State Senator Malcolm Graham. Of all the officeholders seeking the 12th district nomination, Graham's district encompassed the largest portion of the 12th district, and included the large financial sector in uptown Charlotte. He was often described as "more moderate," a "corporate Democrat" with a track record of advocating for Charlotte's larger employers. The only publicly released poll found Graham to be the early lead with 31%, with Adams nine points behind (PPP 2013).

Former City Council Member and Mayoral Candidate James Mitchell was the last of the "competitive" candidates to enter the race. Ironically, it was his late entry into the previous mayoral primary that was summarily judged to be the cause of his narrow defeat against Patrick Cannon, and it was his late entry into the race for the 12th district nomination that handicapped him in this contest as well. "There just wasn't room for another Charlotte candidate at that point," one potential candidate told us. Besides his name recognition and association with Gantt, Mitchell had few other forces working in his direction.

In North Carolina, if no candidate receives 40% of the vote in a primary, the two top candidates then compete in a run-off election. All those believed that if the race went to a run-off that the Charlotte candidate would be able to win the race against the outsider.

But without Foxx, the fractured city Democratic structure lacked an obvious candidate to rally around, and without Gantt or Watt taking a central role in the nomination, they lacked any source of coordination. As a result, all three of these candidates competed among themselves for the same 50% of the vote that came from Charlotte, and gave an opening for a non-Charlottean.

State Representative Alma Adams of Greensboro had represented one of the northern branches of the 12th district for twenty years and had served as the chair of the North Carolina Legislative Black Caucus since 2008. Prior to her election to the state house, Adams served one term on the Greensboro City School Board and four terms on the Greensboro City Council. When asked as to the reputation Adams has developed in Raleigh, most politicos point to her background as an art teacher and her legislative track record focusing on education and issues affecting teachers. As the only woman in the race, EMILY's List was quick to support her campaign, and conducted a large independent expenditure campaign on her behalf.

Marcus Brandon was the other candidate running from outside of Charlotte. Representing an area including parts of High Point in the State Legislature, Brandon has developed a reputation as an independent thinker, and as the candidate least likely to toe the party line. Having been elected to the state house only in 2010, Brandon has only served in the minority, but has been willing to work with Republicans on some pieces of legislation, including school vouchers. As the only openly gay member of the North Carolina state legislature, Brandon also had the endorsement of national LGBT advocacy groups, such as the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund. Some individuals we spoke to worried that even in this heavily Democratic district, Brandon's sexuality could hinder his campaign – the district voted narrowly in favor the controversial Amendment 1 in 2012, which prohibited the state from recognizing same-sex marriages.

In the end, Adams was able to eke out a 44% plurality by running up large margins outside of Mecklenberg County while the four Charlotte candidates split the most populous

county.[7] The county level results for this contest can be seen in Figure 3.5. Almost every subject we spoke with mentioned how the divided field of candidates was critical in allowing a candidate from outside the city to win. Not only did the Charlotte candidates outperform Adams (albeit narrowly, with 45% of the vote), the negative campaigning among the Charlotte candidates was also blamed for the relative decrease in turnout in Charlotte. For example, Charlotte's Mecklenberg County constituted 50% of the Democratic vote in the 2012 general election, but only 45% of the vote in the 2014 primary. Had Charlotte still had the party infrastructure that would have allowed for coalescing behind a single candidate, it is highly unlikely that Alma Adams would have been elected to Congress in 2014.

Figure 3.5: North Carolina's 12th District Democrat Primary Results
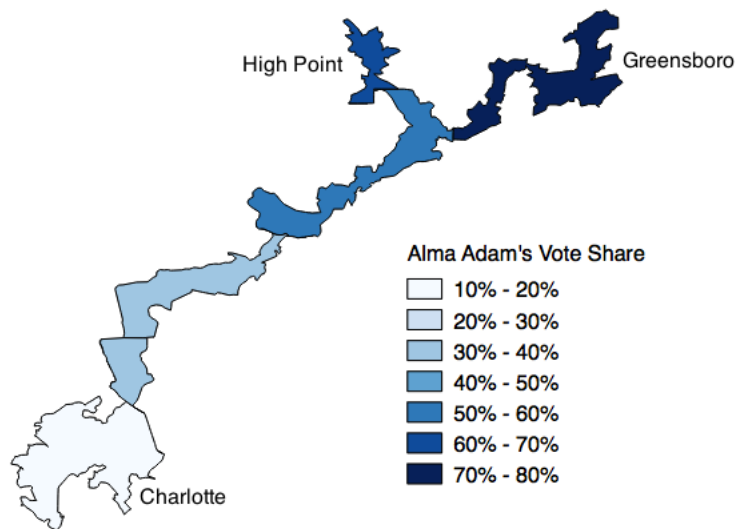
Note: Each county is shaded by Adam's vote share in the county.

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[7]This was undoubtedly aided by the nearly $250,000 in independent expenditure mailing's conducted by EMILY's List and Progressive KICK, but for a clearer example of EMILY's List network at work, see the MI-14 Democratic Primary case study in section 2.3.

3.5 National Interest Groups

National interest groups played a major role in numerous nomination contests in the 2014 cycle. With the formal party organization reserving its resources for competitive seats and their reticence to appear heavy handed in local contests, national interest groups often find open-seat primaries as prime opportunities to elect an ally to Congress. In Michigan's 14th district, EMILY's List strategically targeted voters with massive independent expenditures and helped staff Brenda Lawrence's campaign, which allowed her to overcome the local political machine and win the nomination. In North Carolina's 7th district, the overwhelming support of the Chamber of Commerce allowed David Rouzer to overcome the controversial Tea Party-esque Woody White in an area with little Republican organization.

3.5.1 EMILY's List

The three R's of Michigan's 14th district Democratic primary were reapportionment, redistricting, and retirement. Due to continued population loss, Michigan lost another congressional seat in the 2010 reapportionment, continuing a pattern of seat loss started in 1980. Having gained control of the legislature and the governor's mansion in 2010, Republicans designed the new map to cut one Democratic seat from the Detroit metropolitan area. This in turn placed three incumbents, John Conyers, Hansen Clark, and Gary Peters, in a position to decide between two districts. Neither Clark nor Hansen found a viable path to nomination in challenging Conyers, so both competed in the newly drawn 14th district. However, the newly borders included a sizable portion of suburban Oakland county, which encouraged Brenda Lawrence, mayor of Southfield, to also seek the nomination.

Gary Peters was seen as the logical choice for Democrats to nominate for Governor in 2014 to challenge Republican incumbent Rick Snyder. In order to keep him a strong, viable candidate, the unions, a major player in Michigan Democratic politics, felt it necessary to keep Peters in Congress: A congressman challenging an incumbent governor was better than a former congressman challenging an incumbent governor (POG 2014). Their efforts paid off and Peters beat Hansen 47% to 35% with Brenda Lawrence coming in a distant third.

As predicted, Peters sought statewide office in the following election (although it ended up being the less challenging contest of the open Senate seat as a result of Carl Levin's retirement), opening the 14th district once again. In many ways, the 2014 Democratic primary was a replay of 2012. Hansen Clarke and Brenda Lawrence both sought the nomination once again. Rudy Hobbs, a former employee of Rep. Sander Levin and ally of Gary Peters, took up the mantel as the "establishment" replacement.

Hansen Clarke was in many ways an "accidental" incumbent – his nomination and election to the 13th district in 2010 was more related to his opponent's, Congresswoman's Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick, political scandal involving her son, Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick. One insider noted that whatever candidate had been "crazy" enough to challenge Kilpatrick's safe seat would have lucked into the nomination following the scandal. While he had a small cadre of loyal followers, he lacked institutional connections to the "Democratic stakeholders" and the organizational support necessary to compete in a truly contested primary (POG 2014). His previous tenure as a Congressman from 2011 – 2013 gave him access to some national donors, but he was vastly outspent by his opponents. Those we spoke with often noted that the only element making him competitive was his wide name recognition from his previous runs for office and that geographically, he was the only candidate from the Detroit half of the district. No one we spoke with was surprised Clarke failed to win the nomination in 2014. In fact, the only surprise was how close his 3rd place finish was.

Rudy Hobbs was seen as the one to beat throughout much of the campaign. He was the first candidate to declare his candidacy, and quickly secured the support of Congressman Sander Levin's political organization, which came with "almost all of the institutional support" from the Michigan "Democratic party stakeholders" (POG 2014). In addition to the $225,000 independent expenditure campaign conducted on his behalf by the Levin-affiliated GOALPAC, this support gained him the endorsements of former Governor Jennifer Granholm, former Lt. Governor John Cherry, and outgoing Senator Carl Levin, in addition to the almost unanimous support of the labor community. One insider noted that "run of the mill Democrats will usually defer to the endorsements of the unions," where another mentioned that when it came to the unions' endorsements, "Democrats tend to be more sheep

than goats, more likely to follow than lead." Knowing this, the union's would often support their candidates with large, early shows of support in order to "box out other candidates," or "starve out the competition" (ibid.).

Figure 3.6: Michigan's 14th District Democratic Primary Results
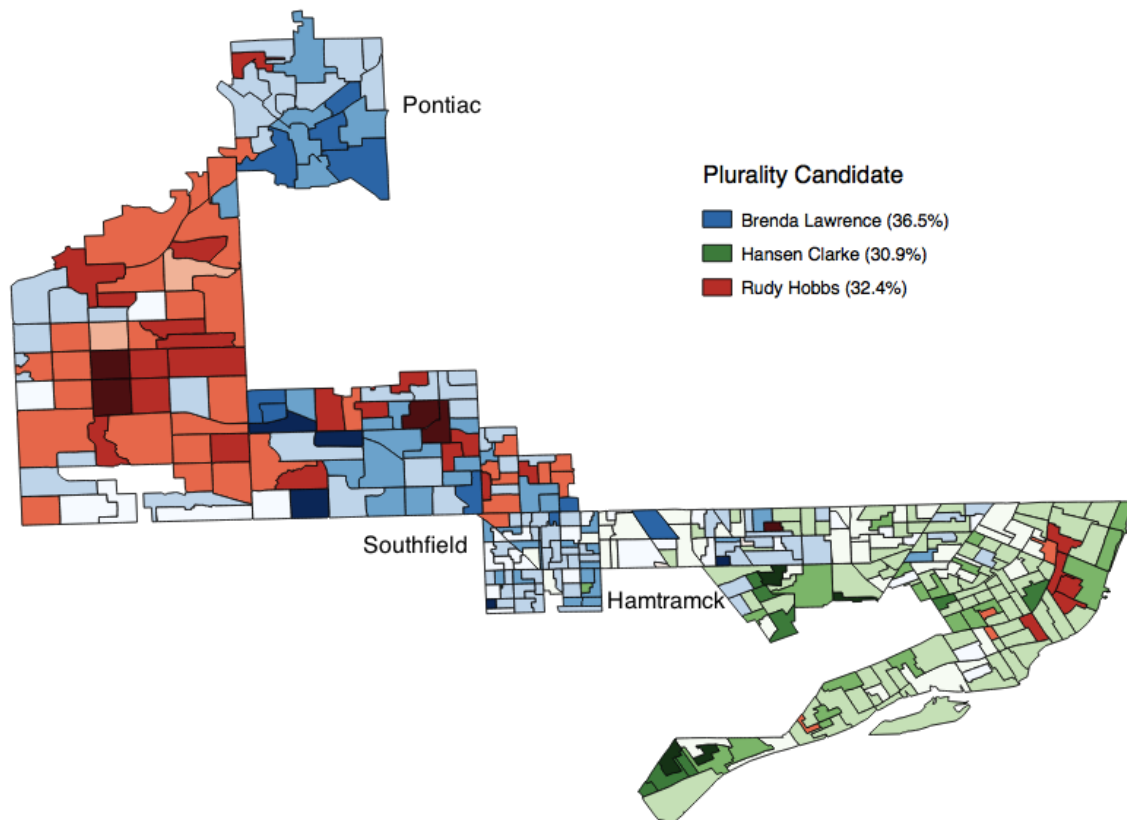
Note: Each precinct is shaded in proportion to the size of each candidate's plurality. Paler precincts are just plurality winners, whereas the darkest of each color represent greater than majority support.

Where Rudy Hobbs had help from the Levin Democratic "establishment," Brenda Lawrence drew her local base of support from "people that she had developed a relationship with during her [mayoralty] who weren't concerned about getting out in front of the unions." Most prominently, Lawrence was supported by a network of women mayors, many of whom her campaign team had helped elect and re-elect. Deirdre Waterman, mayor of Pontiac, Marian McClellan, mayor of Oak Park, Karen Majewski, mayor of Hamtramck, and Brenda

Jones, president of the Detroit City Council, were all early, vocal supporters of Lawrence in the primary. This network was connected by a close group of campaign advisors, most notably, Christine Jensen, who served as the campaign manager for Lawrence, Waterman, McClellan, and as a political advisor to Jones. The recent reelection campaigns of these mayors allowed the Lawrence campaign to tap into existing infrastructure and support at the grassroots level. This also allowed the campaign to have a "more local focus, we could run mailers in Pontiac with Deirdre [Waterman] standing with Brenda [Lawrence]" (ibid.). While many other factors could explain Lawrence's success in these areas, it was in Pontiac, Southfield, and Hamtramck that she ran ahead of her opponents, as demonstrated in Figure 3.6.

This local support was supplemented by national support from EMILY's List. In addition to nearly $300,000 dollars in independent expenditures on her behalf, EMILY's List donors – those donors who contributed to both Lawrence's campaign and EMILY's List – contributed nearly $70,000 directly to her campaign and were roughly 9% of her primary donors overall (Bonica 2015). With Hobbs and Lawrence both representing the Oakland County portion of the district, their relative performance in the Detroit/Wayne County portion of the district was particularly crucial. Even though Hobbs and Lawrence both had independent expenditure mail campaigns conducted on their behalf, insiders noted that EMILY's List was more strategic with their advertisements. They focused more heavily on criticizing Clarke in Wayne County, knowing that was his base of support, and mailed the bulk of their literature to coincide with the period in which absentee voters were receiving their vote-by-mail ballots. One source mentioned that in comparison to union canvassers, who were active only out of professional obligations, the EMILY's List staff were more well-trained and productive than the competition. When questioned as to how EMILY's List helped Lawrence, another source noted:

> "EMILY's list mailing being so heavy and seemed to have come so early. Rudy Hobbs had mailings, [but they] didn't seem to happen until most absentee ballots had been out for two weeks, a week or two. So there was a gap that helped [Lawrence]" (POG 2014).

Table 3.2: County Results in Michigan's 14th District Democratic Primary

Wayne County	Total Votes	%	Election Day	Absentee
Hansen Clarke	16,743	40.50	9,198	7,545
Burgess Foster	429	1.04	259	170
Rudy Hobbs	11,025	26.67	8,108	2,917
Brenda Lawrence	12,988	31.41	7,764	5,224

Oakland County	Total Votes	%	Election Day	Absentee
Hansen Clarke	6,123	18.61	3,663	2,460
Burgess Foster	402	1.02	237	165
Rudy Hobbs	12,971	39.43	8,878	4,093
Brenda Lawrence	13,399	40.73	8,784	4,615

Table 3.2 provides the county level results disaggregated by election day and absentee voting. While Hobbs edged Lawrence by a few hundred votes on election day, Lawrence's eventual 2,391 winning vote margin came entirely from her 2,829 lead in absentee votes, and almost all of that came from Wayne County.

In a race as close as this primary, it is easy to justify any individual factor as critical to explaining the outcome. But the fact that the race was close is surprising in and of itself. Running with the reputation of a previous third place finish against a former member of Congress with large name recognition and a frontrunner with the support of the majority of the party establishment, Lawrence was still able to eke out a win. And while EMILY's List was active in numerous Democratic primaries in 2014, it was in Michigan's 14th that their efforts were most critical. By supplying Lawrence with a comparable independent expenditure campaign and providing a network of donors for Lawrence, they provided her campaign with the resources needed to overcome the more obvious replacements for Gary Peters. As one Wayne County politico noted:

> "EMILY's List was her saving grace because they poured a ton of money in for media, they poured a ton of money in for literature, and it worked. Without them, she's not a U.S. Congresswoman" (ibid.).

3.5.2 The Chamber of Commerce

The dynamics behind the Republican primary in North Carolina's 7th district began in a similar fashion to the contest in Utah's 4th. In 2012, Democratic Representative Mike McIntyre narrowly bested Republican state senator David Rouzer by less than 700 votes to hold his seat for another term. With Republicans expected to make large gains in the 2014 midterm cycle, Rouzer initially sought a rematch with McIntyre. Most suspect that McIntyre realized he was unlikely to win reelection and announced his retirement in January of 2014. Prior to the announcement of his retirement, Rouzer was considered the hands-down favorite for renomination. Closely aligned with the more "establishment," business-oriented faction of the Republican party, Rouzer had the early support of the NRCC, who placed him "On the Radar" in December 2013 and following McIntyre's retirement up-graded him to their "Young Guns" program (Livingston 2013; NRCC 2014).

The lure of an open-seat contest, however, kept Rouzer from walking to the nomination. Chairman of the New Hanover County Commission, Woody White, had filed to run for the seat a few days before the retirement, and publicly declared his campaign following McIntyre's announcement (Hilburn 2014). He ran his campaign as the more conservative candidate in the race, running with the support of former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee (Isenstadt 2014). This, according to some insiders, raised concerns among the more "establishment" forces in the party:

> "After the 2012 election, the U.S. Chamber identified that in many Republican primaries the strongest candidate for the general was not surviving [because]... of the things the Republican candidate was saying, because of the Republican candidate's background...so the U.S. Chamber said 'we need to get involved in the primaries"' (POG 2014).

Woody White was in many ways the type of candidate that worried the Chamber. A political strategist for the U.S. Chamber, Scott Reed, noted that the Chamber will now "look at everything they say...If you say something stupid, we're not going to support you" (Rauch and La Raja 2017). As law student, Woody White testified to many controversial beliefs

toward homosexuals. When asked whether he believed homosexuals should be treated as criminals before a Nebraska legislative committee, White said, "I come from a state in the South where it is still a crime to engage in sodomy. I would, as a personal choice, I would say, yes" (WECT 2014).

Given how likely the district was to switch to the Republicans in the fall, however, his occupation as a trial lawyer likely proved more salient than his positioning on social issues. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and most Republicans had long stood in conflict with the Association of Trial Lawyers of America (see Segal 1997).

> "We have this interesting dynamic emerging in our politics in North Carolina where we have this cohort of Republican trial lawyers...and we've had to grapple with the historic antagonism between the trial lawyers and the business community...but Republican trial lawyers...are still trial lawyers at the end of the day and still carry that perceived threat to the business community..." (ibid).

Figure 3.7: U.S. Chamber's Advertisement Against Woody White

This hostility between establishment Republicans and trial lawyers was not unique to North Carolina. In Louisiana, one major donor noted once candidate's viability because "he didn't raise any money from the wrong people...he didn't have any trial lawyers money." Another noted that "prior to 2008, 2009 you *never* saw a plaintiff attorney contributing" to a particular Republican candidate (ibid.).

With their new-found dedication to get involved in primaries and their historic animosity toward trial lawyers, the U.S. Chamber needed little persuasion to support Rouzer's primary campaign. They ran a $300,000 independent expenditure attacking Woody White. Their ad claimed that "the last thing Congress needs is another trial lawyer like Woody White" (Wesleyan Media Project 2014a, see Figure 3.7). The more establishment elements of the Republican Party followed the Chamber's lead. American Action Network, a "center-right" think tank chaired by former Senator Norm Coleman, invested $50,000 on a radio ad with the same message, while the YG Network, a 501(4)c organization started by former staffers of then-majority leader Eric Cantor (Conradis 2013), spent $100,000 on mailers and phone calls accusing White of being part of the "lawsuit bonanza that destroys jobs" (Isenstadt 2014).

Most insiders attributed these nationally coordinated efforts as what pushed Rouzer over the edge. While no polls were made publicly available, insiders viewed the race as close, perhaps slightly leaning toward Rouzer, but "the Chamber's ad put the nail in the coffin." Rouzer bested White 53% to 40%, and went on to win the general election with little opposition. This national interest group, in coordination with establishment Republican organizations, was able to provide it's chosen candidate with the resources necessary to win the nomination and eventually take a seat in Congress. In an area with historically less developed formal parties (Mayhew 1986), these groups acted in the primaries not via the party, but individually, as their is little incentive. While Rouzer was definitely an ambitious and talented candidate, it was the support of this network of party actors that set his campaign on a path to success.

3.6   Local Interest Groups

Local interest groups often have access to a range of campaign resources beyond the reach of their national counterparts. In Pennsylvania's 13th district, local trade unions were able to marshal a massive ground game organization on behalf of underdog Brendan Boyle and held enough sway in the political environment to keep Boyle's area of the district free from electoral competition, allowing him to handedly win the primary. In Louisiana's 6th district, Lane Grigsby's network of support – centered around the maritime construction industry in which he made his fortune – allows him to serve as a one-man party, marshaling field clearing and financial resources behind his chosen candidate, Garret Graves.

3.6.1   IBEW Local 98

Pennsylvania Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz began laying the groundwork to challenge incumbent Republican Governor Tom Corbett quietly following her reelection in 2012. By early 2014 four individuals emerged as candidates in the Democratic primary to fill her now open seat. The list of candidates for the nomination was in many ways unsurprising – each candidate coming from commonly recognized interests within the Democratic Party. Valarie Arkoosh, a health care activist, was an early advocate of the Affordable Care Act and the president of the National Physicians Alliance, a progressive health care organization. State Representative Brendan Boyle, elected from the largely blue-collar area of Northeast Philadelphia, ran proudly as the "union candidate." Daylin Leach, a state senator from suburban Montgomery County, was an unabashed "liberal lion," was known throughout Pennsylvania for his progressive policy positions, including marriage equality, strict environmental regulations, and expanded abortion access. Former Congresswoman Marjorie Margolies built her campaign around her national star-power derived from her previous tenure in the House and her close relationship with Bill and Hillary Clinton. Given her national connections, name recognition, public polling, and early fundraising dominance, Margolies was considered the frontrunner for the duration of the campaign.

The outcome of the race, however, surprised many political observers. Despite Margolies

front-runner status and wide name recognition, she was unable to carry that momentum over the finish line. Neither were Arkoosh, the candidate who raised the most money, nor Leach, the candidate with the greatest PAC support, able to secure the nomination. Behind in the polls, out-raised and out-spent by his opponents, Boyle won the Democratic primary with 41% of the vote to runner-up Margolies' 27%. The heavy Democratic lean of the district overall comfortably carried Boyle into Congress come November.

How was Boyle able to overcome these disadvantages to become the Democratic nominee? Boyle benefited from the overwhelming support of organized labor. As a campaign staffer summarized, he "had an existing relationship with organized labor, which is very strong in southeast Pennsylvania, and particularly strong in northeast Philly" (POG 2014). Endorsements, campaign donations, mailers, independent expenditures, campaign advisers, canvassers, phone-bank operators, election day door-knockers – all of this and more were marshaled by the Philadelphia unions in support of Boyle's campaign. Five months prior to the primary, Brendan Boyle had already secured over 20 endorsements from major trade unions in the district, and was endorsed by the state legislators most closely affiliated with the labor movement (Boyle for Congress 2014).

Most notably, Boyle was supported by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). With over 5,000 members and an average election cycle budget of 3-4 million dollars, the IBEW is one of the most influential political groups in the state. While an electrical workers union, they also represent line-runners, the mechanical crew at TastyKakes bakery, the broadcasters of all Philadelphia sporting events, and many other trades in Philadelphia.

The IBEW provided numerous key resources to support the Boyle campaign. First, they "push hard" on their membership to vote in every election: According to a high ranking political operative of the union, they can expect nearly 80% turnout among their members even in generally low turnout elections. Second, both union officials and those affiliated with the Boyle campaign spoke to the massive canvassing efforts union volunteers performed for the Boyle campaign. One individual affiliated with the unions described a ground game operation that dwarfed that of Arkoosh, Leach, and Margolies combined. In the month leading up to the primary, the IBEW had 10-20 people each weekday and nearly 50 people

on the weekends making phone calls, knocking on doors, passing out literature, and serving as a central hub for smaller unions to coordinate their own political outreach. On Election Day, the efforts were even more impressive. Around 1,000 union members spent the day making phone calls, knocking on doors, helping individuals get to the polls, passing out literature at polling locations, and canvassing low-turnout areas. He estimated that *every* registered Democrat had their door knocked on at least once by a union canvasser (POG 2014). Verifying these efforts in retrospect is difficult, but while conducting an exit poll on election day, my fellow surveyors and I saw union workers passing out literature near all of the selected polling locations first hand, and some reported seeing vans driving seniors to the polls (see DeMora et al. 2015).

Labor groups also put their financial resources behind Boyle. Building a Better Pennsylvania, a political action committee affiliated with the trade unions of Philadelphia, spent over $350,000 on independent expenditures on behalf of his campaign, with over 2/3 of that coming from the IBEW (Brennan 2014). The strong support of the dominant IBEW encouraged other regional unions to coordinate behind Boyle. In addition to the $5,000 direct contribution from the IBEW, nineteen other local unions maxed out in their support, which alone raised $100,000 for the Boyle campaign.

In addition to these visible efforts, elites interviewed in the lead up to the primary believed that pressure from unions and city party officials kept other candidates from entering the race. Boyle won the endorsement of Rep. Bob Brady, chair of the Philadelphia Democratic Party, which discouraged other candidates from the city from entering the race (Gibson 2013). This provided Boyle with a geographic monopoly over the Philadelphia half of the district. Campaign operatives expressed the importance of keeping candidates like Jonathan Saidel, former Philadelphia City Controller, and state Rep. Mark Cohen out of the race to Boyle's eventual success. In sum, Boyle had the unwavering support of an organized interest group within the larger party network, which provided him with numerous campaign resources beyond the reach of political "self-starters."

This is not to suggest that the other candidates lacked any group support, or were motivated solely by their own ambition for office. Both Arkoosh and Leach had long standing

relationships with an existing network of support within the Democratic Party. Arkoosh received the endorsement of many medical organizations including the American Medical Association, and received as much as 75% of her campaign contributions from people working in medical fields (DeMora et al. 2015). Leach received the endorsements of many liberal leaning interest groups like the Progressive Change Campaign Committee. Margolies, while political inactive in recent years, was an early success story for and long time supporter of EMILY's List and maintained strong connections to it's founding members, and her support of the Clinton network brought in numerous large donors (Gibson 2014a) and helped clear some competitors out of the race (Gibson 2014b).

But many big interests within the traditional Democratic coalition sat out of the race. EMILY's List decided not to choose between the two female candidates in the race because both had a long history with the organization. EMILY's List and NARAL Pro-Choice America coordinated a series of independent expenditures against Boyle for his ambiguous position on abortion rights (Field 2014a), but without an endorsed candidate to benefit from their efforts, most political observers in the district felt the efforts were a waste. An individual affiliated with a leading LGBT rights group in Pennsylvania noted that the strong records of all the Montgomery County candidates made issuing an endorsement difficult. Leach, a long-time vocal advocate for pro-choice and progressive LGBT policies, expressed frustration that he didn't have the support of more liberal advocacy groups in the crowded primary. In comparison to the city party organization, the less centralized decision-making process of the Montgomery County Democratic Committee made coordination behind one candidate difficult and any attempt to push a candidate out of the race impossible.

How much impact did Boyle's coalition of support have on the outcome of the race? Boyle dominated the half of the district located in the city of Philadelphia, winning 70% of the vote in the city, while the remaining three candidates divided up Montgomery County, as demonstrated in Figure 3.8. Leach won the precincts in his state senate district near Norristown and Arkoosh won her home of Springfield Township, where Margolies won the remainder of Montgomery County. One really can't tell whether these results were driven by the campaigns and not just voters' preferences for home-town candidates. But even if we

assume that voters reflexively choose the candidate from their area, the benefit to the Boyle campaign came from his geographic monopoly over Philadelphia and the intense mobilization of these supporters, which was the result of union actions discouraging other Philadelphia challengers and turning out voters in the city.

Figure 3.8: Pennsylvania's 13th District Democratic Primary Results
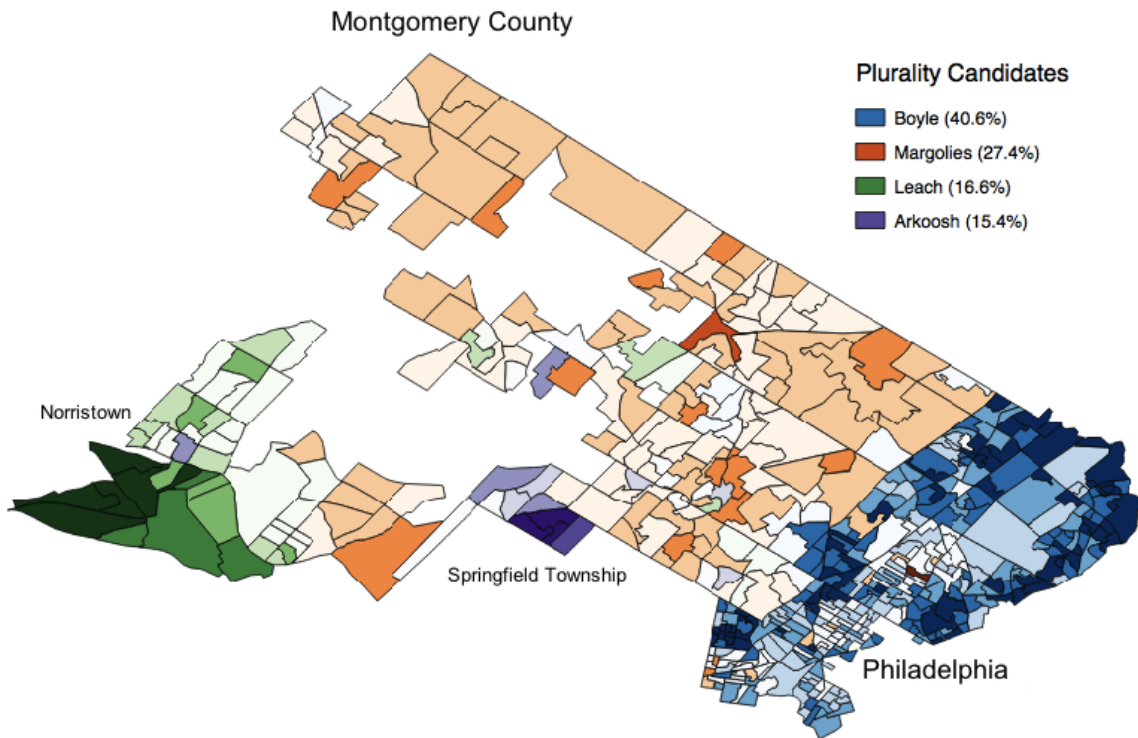
Note: Each precinct is shaded in proportion to the size of each candidate's plurality. Paler precincts are just plurality winners, whereas the darkest of each color represent greater than majority support.

Understanding this predisposition, the unions focused their efforts on the Philadelphia portion of the district, canvassing nearly exclusively in Philadelphia. Using a geographic regression discontinuity model on the turnout of Democratic voters in the 13th district, I find a nearly 3% increase in turnout among those from the district in Philadelphia compared to those in Philadelphia but not in the district, but no difference for those in Montgomery

County.[8] While it is not possible to parse the impact of the Boyle campaign itself versus the trade unions, given that both both organizations agree to the major role of labor in the campaign efforts, it is safe to assume that the canvassing and GOTV efforts of the unions had a tangible impact on voter turnout in pro-Boyle areas, contributing to if not securing his nomination.

3.6.2   Cajun Industries

Lane Grigsby, the founder and former Chairman of Cajun Industries, a construction company engaged in projects involving "oil, gas and energy; refining; chemical processing; power; manufacturing and buildings; governmental infrastructure; alternative energy; emergency preparedness and disaster response; communication; water quality; and more" (Cajun Industries 2018), is one of the most prolific donors and "opinion leaders" in Louisiana Republican politics. He has spent millions of dollars supporting candidates, pushing particular policies, and supporting political and charitable organizations. He conducts his own polling, opposition research, and candidate vetting operations. Journalists at *The Times-Picayune* found that of the 400 biggest campaign donors in Louisiana, Grigsby was third, coming in right after the Democratic Party and right before the Republican Party, bundling at least $1.3 million between 2009 and 2012 (Zurik 2013). When asked about Grigsby, one campaign fundraiser noted that

> "there are certain people in the community, especially in Baton Rouge, that are kind of the main players in politics, they max out their personal donations, they have companies, they max out their PAC donations, they're the big players. Once they give you the go ahead, they write you the big checks, and then they branch out and tell their employees 'this is a good guy, you might want to donate to him"' (POG 2014).

In many ways, Grigsby and his construction industry network are a party unto themselves.

U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy's political career has been greatly helped by Grisby's support. Grigsby and his company contributed to his first run for the state Senate, after the incumbent

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[8]See §3.6 and Appendix A for a more detail.

ran for Lt. Governor. Grigsby dissuaded Cassidy from running in the special election to replace Republican Congressman Richard Baker. When the Democrat surprisingly won that special election, Grigsby recruited Cassidy to challenge the incumbent, Dan Cazayoux. He had an "ace up his sleeve" to make sure that Republicans took back the seat with Cassidy. While Grigsby helped finance his campaign, he also recruited another Democrat, Michael Jackson, to run as an independent to siphon off Democratic votes (Kraushaar 2008). By his own accounting, he spent $87,000 on an independent expenditure campaign on Jackson's behalf. His political network also helped Jackson raise over $20,000 dollars (Moses 2008). As he explained:

> "I can only give $2,600 as an individual," but added with a laugh, "my wife can give $2,600, my son and two daughters can give $2,600, oh and their spouses can give $2,600, my grand kids can give $2,600...I've got a company of 2,200 employees, with the top 100 being pretty well paid executives – I can go around saying 'hello, this is my friend Jackson, he sure could use your support...and your wife's!'."

Others we spoke to largely attributed Bill Cassidy's congressional win to Grisby's efforts. And when then-Congressman Cassidy was considering challenging Mary Landrieu in the 2014 U.S. Senate contest, it was Grigsby who he called for advice.

Politically, Grigsby is primarily motivated by a desire to limit the influence of unions over business. He expressed disappointment in former Rep. Alexander's voting in support of Project Labor Agreements during the Hurricane Katrina reconstruction (see McKay 2011). One conservative commentator noted that he was involved in pushing for the merger of the police departments and the sheriff's office because the sheriff's office was not unionized, and how he pushed for the abolition of the plumbing certification board as a limitation on trade (POG 2014). He is also active in the charter school movement in Louisiana and has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on electing pro-charter school boardmembers (Sentell 2015). In interviews he noted that a former moderate Democratic Congressman Don Cazayoux's

> "only drawback is the fact that the labor unions gave him three hundred and eighty thousand dollars to run...they own him...the one thing that I'm interested

in is the labor votes. I'm a non-union contractor. I went through right to work
with Louisiana and all those wars and...I don't want that to ever come back. And
so Cazayoux's only black mark is that he's owned by the labor unions."

Considering himself "very active in the district," it was no surprise that he was an active player in the search for Cassidy's replacement in Louisiana's 6th district. Initially, he actively recruited candidates into the race, but "finding someone qualified for this open seat proved to be impossible. Therefore, [he] sat back and said 'let's see what individuals are interested'." And given his reputation, these interested candidates all made their pitch to Grigsby.

Grigsby claimed to have dissuaded three candidates from entering the race. One city council member who approached Grigsby was informed that he "can't raise the money to be a serious candidate." He talked a district attorney from the state out of the race because "almost everything you've done in your past history, no matter how far back it goes, is going to come forth in a campaign." After conducting his own opposition research, he also convinced a socially conservative activist that running for Congress was not a good idea, because it would allow him to be "painted as the devil himself."

The founder and CEO of Anedot, a fundraising software company, and the grandson of former LSU football coach, Paul Dietzel was the first to publicly announce his intention to seek Cassidy's seat. Most people we spoke to described him as a successful businessman, a traditional conservative, and a talented fundraiser. He had held no prior elected office, but had impressive name recognition "thanks to his family's background in LSU football. Dietzel's grandfather led LSU to the 1958 college football championship after a perfect season and is a member of the state's sports hall of fame" (Trygstad 2013). As an investor in Dietzel's company, however, Grigsby was skeptical that an individual who had recently started a business should be pursuing higher office:

> "I said 'Paul, you've gotten an awful lot of money from an awful lot of investors to
> make a successful businesses. It's not yet successful. And here you are thinking
> about running for Congress? Anyway, he's still running. But I have questions of
> trust."

In December of 2014, State Senator Dan Claitor joined Dietzel in the primary election. Claitor had developed a reputation as an "unpredictable legislator known to weigh each individual bill based on merit and conscience" (McGaughy 2013). Grigsby described him as "intellectually gifted...he sees things from every angle and he doesn't wear the conservative blinders," but that "eclectic nature of his just [wouldn't] fit in Washington," not to mention that he was "as lovable as a porcupine." He came from an old Baton Rouge family, and had a good deal of name recognition from his state senate campaigns, but "Congress is a young person's game" because you need a long tenure to develop the seniority to be effective.

But Garret Graves had potential. He had served as an aide for Representative Billy Tauzin and Senator David Vitter, focusing on coastal policy and mitigating climate change impact, eventually rising to chief legislative aide to the U.S. Senate Committee on Environmental and Public Works. Republican Governor Bobby Jindal then appointed Graves to head the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. In this capacity "Garrett has been up and down the coast... knows the local politicians...and they're more more likely to gather their constituency behind somebody that they have rapport with." A local journalist described him as "very well spoken, not a down the line conservative...he's very good at finding pots of federal money that he can apply to a problem and he's very good at the legislative process up in D.C."

In our first interview, Grigsby hinted that there were some tensions between Graves and elements of his construction network. As a result he invited Graves in to be vetted by his "team" – the executives from Cajun Industries and its affiliates. During our second interview, he claimed that Graves had ameliorated any concerns – "had owned his mistakes" – and that Grigsby "elected to round up as much resources as I can through my family and my friends, and we've made a sizable contribution to Garrett Graves...I made a decision to support Garrett Graves significantly."

He estimated that just from his personal and professional network, he could bundle a maximum of $250,000 dollars for a particular candidate, and if he then extended his reach to his peripheral business networks of "electrical and mechanical contractors" he could raise another $250,000. Figure 3.9 provides an extremely conservative estimate of the amount his

network was able to raise for Garret Graves in 2014. Graves was able to raise over $40,000 from those who Grigsby mentioned as his immediate family (whose names are anonymized for confidentiality) and those who listed Cajun Industries, LLC or one of its subsidiaries as their employer in FEC records. While Grigsby did not mention these organizations specifically, he raised another $30,000 from Baton Rouge based construction firm executives within the first three months of his campaign. But these numbers likely underestimate the financial resources his network can activate. As he described:

> "I've seen some estimates [of his network's contributions] and I just laugh at them...they'll say we contributed $40,000 in [a particular] race...and I'll say they missed another 200,000, now didn't they! ... It's hard to know that [name redacted] is my daughter...they didn't see all the tentacles that tie it all together."

Figure 3.9: A Conservative Diagram of Lane Grigsby's Network in Support of Graves
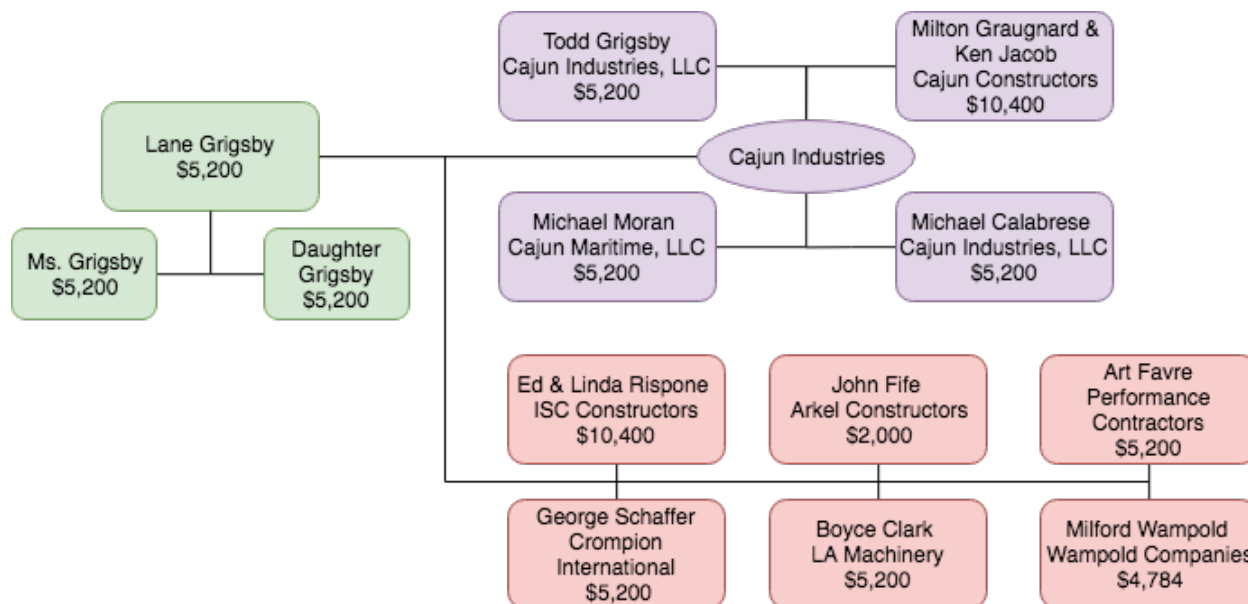
Those shaded in purple are executives at Cajun Industries, LLC. Those shaded in red are executives from Baton Rouge based construction firms. Donors in green are Lane Grigsby's family members. All donors besides Grigsby's immediate family contributed within the first three months of Graves' campaign.

Donors quickly moved to support Graves campaign. In one month, Graves gathered more contributions and more money than any of his opponents, as demonstrated in Figure

3.10, including Paul Dietzel who had been campaign for over a year. These early contributors included Michael Graugnard, Todd Grigsby, and Ken Jacob, executives at Cajun Industries, Clark Boyce, Chairman of Louisiana Machinery, John Fife, President of Arkel Constructors, Art Favre of Performance Contractors, and George Schaffer, President of Crompion International, Ed Rispone (and his wife Linda), founder and chairman of ISC Constructors – all executives of Baton Rouge based construction firms – most of whom contributed the maximum federal amount. While Grigby's network is the most visible network in the district, Graves' father's engineering firm also activated a similar network of support on his behalf – he received numerous, early, maximum donations from executives at engineering firms based in Baton Rouge.

Figure 3.10: Campaign Contributors to Louisiana's 6th District Republicans
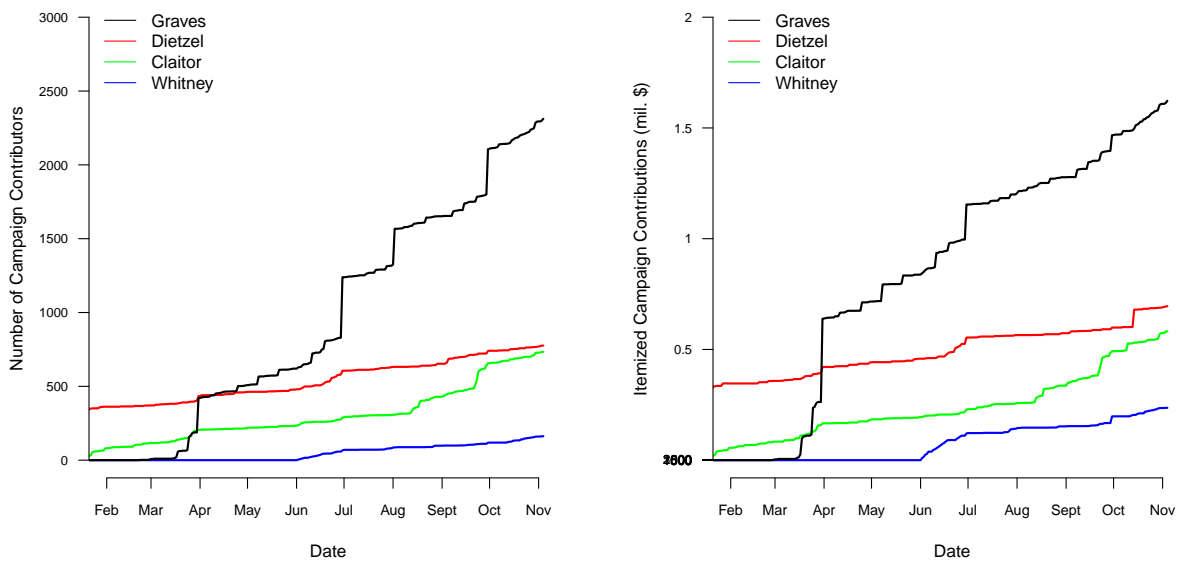
Despite this early and sizable financial support, it would be wrong to have considered him the frontrunner at this point. Having never served in public office, he had no natural base of support upon which to build a campaign. He had little name recognition of his own, although his father's engineering firm was a familiar local business. In the public polls released in early 2014, Graves received 3% in February, 4% in March, and 2% in April

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compared to Claitor's and Dietzel's 11-20% (Alford 2014; JMC 2014).

But the support of Grigby's network went beyond the financial contributions. Grigsby's support alone was a "sign of legitimacy" to conservatives and Republicans in the district given his "principled" reputation. And the very act of activating the network increased his name recognition and approval across employees in these industries. While fewer lower level employees at many of these firms contributed directly to Graves' campaign, they knew that he was supported by their companies' leadership – stealing a quote from the labor organizers in Philadelphia – "people tend to vote their jobs." Moreover, as one candidate put it, "anybody who puts money in your campaign...they're going to do a little more than just write a check...they're going to tell their friends...you for sure count on them to roll out and on election day vote for you."

Louisiana has a unique "jungle primary" system in which all candidates run in a single primary election, which occurs on general election day in November, and then if no candidate receives a majority, the top two candidates, regardless of party, compete in a run-off election the first week in December. This creates a uniquely long primary campaign cycle in Louisiana. So while these professional networks quickly moved to support Graves after his announcement, the more traditional measures of group support – endorsements, mailers, etc. – came much later in the cycle. In October, the Business-Industry Political Action Committee (BIPAC) – "the largest grassroots business network in the United States" – endorsed Graves for Congress (Graves 2014). But even here, Grigsby's impact could be felt. The press release announcing the endorsement included additional praise from Grigsby: "Garret understands what drives the economy in South Louisiana. He has a proven record of breaking through the bureaucracy and dysfunction of Washington."

While many factors contributed to Graves making it into the December run-off, Grigsby's personal/professional/political network organized around the construction industry was central to Graves' raising the resources and name recognition necessary to surpass his more well-known opponents. By channeling a significant number of campaign contributions, connecting Graves to the important business industries in the district, and facilitating important business and political endorsements for Graves, Grigsby's network was able to marshal the

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resources necessary to push his chosen candidate over the line.

3.7 Activist Networks

While traditional interest groups like the Chamber of Commerce and EMILY's List, local businesses and labor unions, formal parties and candidate-centered machines made up a bulk of the networks we observed supporting candidates, in some cases we observed truly grassroots networks of activists and party faithful organizing in important ways to support their preferred candidates. These networks were significantly more difficult to observe from 35,000 feet. They often lacked formal organization, and so the telltale signs of group support – PAC contributions and independent expenditures – were absent. However, those tools are powerful insofar as they provide the resources to reach their supporters and turn them out to the pools. As the primary contest in Pennsylvania's 6th district demonstrates, the influence of these local groups can, under the right circumstances, carry more weight than these more visible resources.

3.7.1 Meddling Marcel

Montgomery County Democratic Chairman, Marcel Groen, thought he had found the perfect candidate to take back Jim Gerlach's seat for Democrats. Obama had won the district by nearly 10% in 2008, and lost it by about a point in 2012. It was one of the few pick-up opportunities in a midterm election where the Democrats were poised to fight against voters' six-year itch toward the Obama presidency.

Mike Parrish, however, had the resume of an exception. He was a West Point graduate with 14 years of active duty service as an Army Aviator. He had advanced degrees from prestigious universities, but in the "practical fields" of engineering and business. He worked for General Electric and eventually founded his own environmental services company and then served as CEO of Environmental Infrastructure Holdings Corporation. As a former Republican, he had a conservative to non-existent record on the more controversial social issues. A handsome, moderate, veteran, business-owner – what more could a party leader

hope for?

Groen wasn't alone. Democratic Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi quickly endorsed Parrish, sent a fundraising e-mail on his behalf, and held a fundraiser for him in Philadelphia shortly after he announced (Field 2014b). Minority Whip Steny Hoyer held another fundraiser for him later that month (Foster 2014a). Congressman Bob Brady, chair of the powerful Philadelphia Democratic Party, quickly followed suit and endorsed Parrish (Smith 2014a). With eyes on the general election, the national party quickly converged on the candidate they found most electable.

The landscape changed when Gerlach decided to retire rather than seek reelection. Manan Trivedi, who had previously challenged Gerlach in 2010 and 2012, announced that he too would be seeking the Democratic nomination in the 6th district following Gerlach's announcement. In Trivedi's announcement, he touted the endorsement of dozens of local Democratic politicians and interest groups, including Wendell Young IV, President UFCW Local 1776; Kate Michelman, President Emerita, NARAL Pro-Choice America; Dennis Bomberger, Business Agent, Chocolate Workers Local 464; State Representative Mark Painter; Micah Mahjoubian, LGBT Rights Activist; Frank Burstein, Chairman of the Limerick Township Democratic Committee; and many other local Democratic committee people.

Regardless, the national and county party leaders were initially confident that voters would choose the more electable Parrish over the "perennial loser" Trivedi. Upon Trivedi's entrance into the race, Parrish commented that "I welcome Manan into the race...and I have confidence that voters in the primary will select the strongest nominee to ensure a Democrat wins this very tough district in November" (Foster 2014c).

But after Trivedi's announcement, local Democrats began to express greater skepticism toward Parrish's candidacy. As one activist explained, "Parrish was a Republican. I know gay Republicans who switched, and I get that. I know environmental Republicans who became Democrats, and I get that! This guy works producing fracking chemicals. I don't get that, I don't trust that" (POG 2014) One campaign worker in the neighboring district complained about "Meddling Marcel" trying to push a nominee on the district "House of

Cards style" (ibid.). A readers poll on the ostensibly non-partisan, but essentially Democratic political blog *PoliticsPA*[9], also showed growing dissatisfaction with Parrish: Trivedi bested Parrish, 53% to 48%.

Donors were also more hesitant to support Parrish than Trivedi. Figure 3.11 presents the number of national party donors – those donors who had gave to both Trivedi and a national Democratic campaign committee – as well as the in-state and out-of-state donors supporting each candidate over the course of the primary. The blue line are Trivedi's donors, and the black line is Parrish's donors. The greyed area is the period of time between Trivedi's announcement and Parrish's withdrawal from the race. Trivedi gained the support of among all subsets of donors at much faster rates than Parrish, but Trivedi only surpassed Parrish with out-of-state donors after Parrish dropped out. Together, these graphs provide additional evidence that the surge in support for Trivedi was driven by primarily local forces.

It was the county conventions that finally undid the party's plans. The party leaders suspected (and rightly so) that the convention delegates would be more apt to support Trivedi over Parrish given his long-time relationships with the members derived from his previous runs for office. Groen and his Chester County compatriot, Michele Vaughn, hoped to keep the delegates from making an endorsement at each county's party conventions and to allow the voters to decide in the primary. Trivedi, however, reached out to many of the delegates beforehand and persuaded them to support him. One delegate at the Chester County convention reported that the chairs motion to not consider an endorsement in the race was overturned by a voice vote. Another delegate couldn't recall the series of events, but admitted that the party leaders had wished to avoid the endorsement. In either situation, the results were the same, Trivedi earned the Committee's endorsement, receiving 74% of the vote over Parrish (Carrozza 2014). "It is because of Manan's lifetime commitment to fighting for working families and improving education, *true Democrat values*, that I fully support him, and I am sure the Chester County Democrats endorsed him by such a large

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[9]While the ownership team holds no editorial influence, it's predominantly left-leaning and Democratic. For example, Larry Ceisler, was named him one of the most influential Democrats in Pennsylvania in 2010 by *Politics Magazine* (Roarty and Coit 2010).

Figure 3.11: Campaign Contributions to Pennsylvania's 6th District Democrats
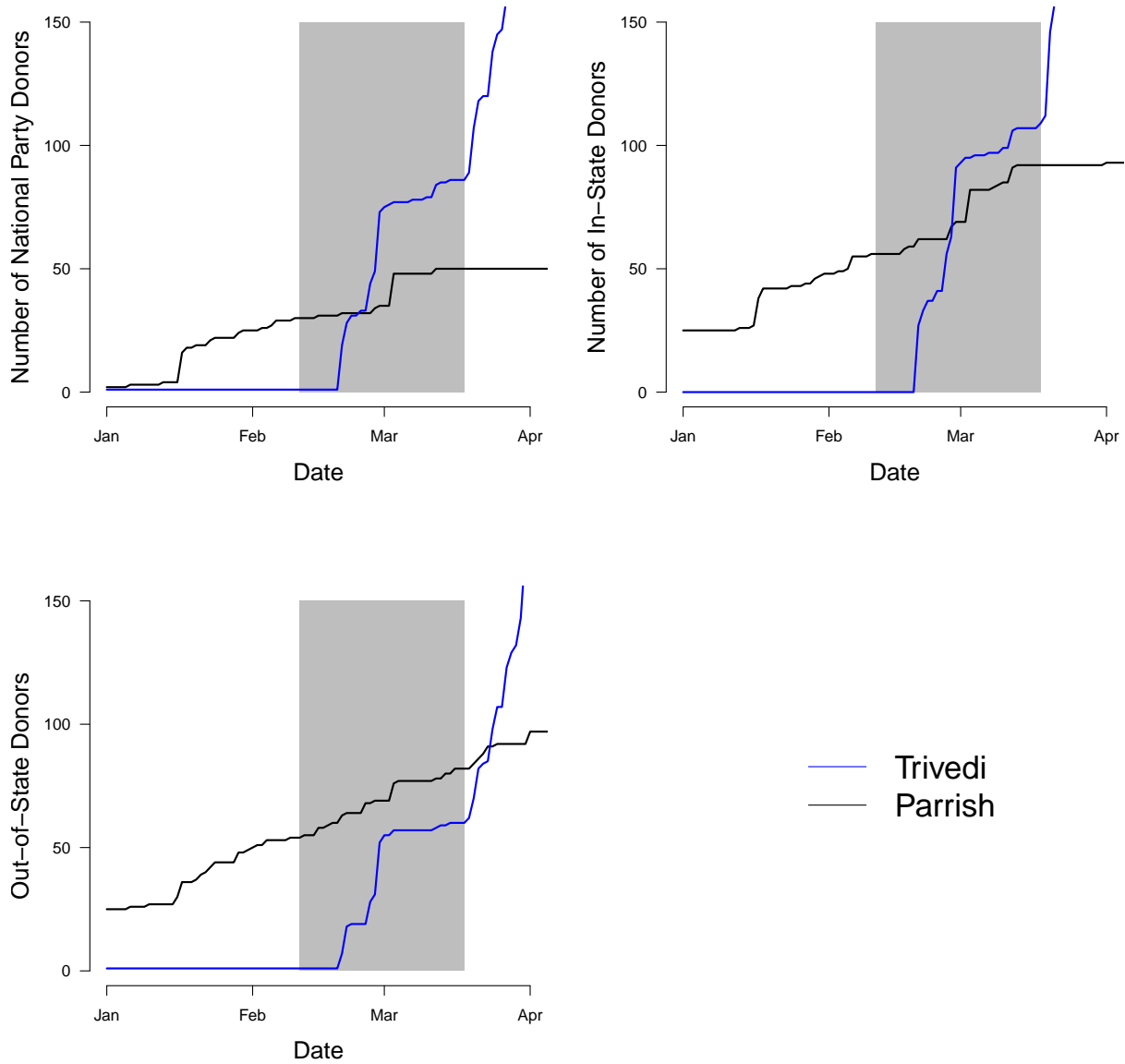
Note: The three figures provide the number of national party, in-state, and out-of-state donors contributing to Manan Trivedi's and Mike Parrish's campaign over the course of the primary. The greyed area is the period of time during which both candidates were in the race.

majority for those very same reasons." Democratic committeeperson Diane O'Dwyer said of the Chester County endorsement (emphasis added, Smith 2014b). Two days later, a similar

dynamic played out at Groen's Montgomery County convention. It was reported as "highly possible [that] his familiarity with local politicos contributed to his massive total of 97% of the vote from Montgomery County's Democrats" (Field 2014c).

In Pennsylvania's 6th district, a coordinated network of donors and activists coordinated behind their preferred candidate, made sure he had the financial resources to compete with the national party's preferred candidate, and organized to make sure he had access to the powerful endorsements of the party committees. This network of activists was not a formal party or organized around an elected official, nor was it driven by an organized interest group. It was a local grassroots network of party activists built on their shared long-term relationships.

3.8   Networks At Work

This typology describes less a series of discrete actors than a constellation of diverse, interconnected actors with varied relationships that are difficult to disentangle. In Utah, while the formal party controls the nomination, the composition of that formal party was the direct result of a politician-centered network's efforts to elect their supportive activists. In Michigan, much of the Levin machine's strength came from its close relationships with local organized labor. In Virginia, the borders between the Tea Party activists and the formal party organization were blurred and constantly in flux. In Pennsylvania, much of the IBEW's strength came from the financial leverage it held over the city Democratic Party.

But it was these diverse party networks marshaling resources on behalf of their chosen candidates that helped propel them to the nomination. These networks were often the "intense policy demanding" coalitions hypothesized by Bawn et al. (2012). The structure of these networks, however, varied across the different districts. Rather than a hierarchical structure in which the formal party organizes a diverse array of party actors, competition between formal party organizations, politician-centered machines, interest groups, and activist networks was more common. This competition was driven by a lack of concern for a competitive general election and the expected value of a "champion" in Congress.

While the overlapping nature of these categorizes makes distinguishing the nature of the party difficult, they are extremely useful for highlighting the variety of resources available to different types of networks. Different types of networks are able to use different resources on behalf of their chosen candidates. The use of different resources was often predicated by the particular structure of a network. A group like EMILY's List may provide campaign staffers for a candidate, but have no formal powers of the nomination process in each district. The national parties, unwilling to appear heavy handed and step on the toes of local organizations, rarely make endorsements in a competitive primary, but may funnel resources to their preferred candidates behind the scenes (Hassell 2016; 2018). Local activists may have the grassroots support to knock on doors for their candidates, but rarely have the financial resources to pursue the five- and six-figure independent expenditure campaigns increasingly common in the post-*Citizen United* era.

But these resources are exceptionally difficult to measure systematically. In order to describe the dynamics in a mere dozen races took close to five years of field work, hundreds of interviews, and untold amounts of primary source research. It is an impractical method for measuring general patterns and relationships in primary nominations at large. In the next chapter, I will highlight these resources, stress the difficulties in systematically measuring them, and provide an alternative measure that I believe allows us to systematically assess the impact of party network support on the electoral prospects of primary candidates based on the one resource all networks were able to provide for their candidates – campaign contributions.

Chapter 3 Appendix A: Geographic Regression Discontinuity

Data Sources

Data for this analysis come from three sources. First, the Pennsylvania Voter File, purchased from the Pennsylvania Secretary of State's Office, provides both the home address and voter history for all registered voters in Pennsylvania. This will be used to determine individual level voter turnout in the 2014 Pennsylvania Democratic Primary. Second, the U.S. Census Bureau provides geographic shapefile data for state, county, congressional district, and state legislative district boundaries. Third, the Data Science Toolkit provides geocoding services which allow me to determine the latitude and longitude coordinates of voters from their addresses. These data sources together will allow me to calculate the distance of individual voters from political borders – in this case the distance between a voter and the border of their congressional district. Finally, over 50 hours of elite interviews were conducted with the candidates, campaign staff, interest groups, and local activists during the campaign season to better understand the underlying dynamics of the race.

Compound Treatment Reduction

In geographic regression discontinuity models, researchers are often presented with situations in which more than one geographic 'treatment' affects the outcome of interest at the same time. In the primary in question, voters were exposed to primary campaigns for governor, congress, state senate, and state legislature. Election law in the United States is often administered at the county level, and exposure to campaign advertisements is often confined to particular media markets which are unique combinations of counties. In many of these instances the borders between these politically salient districts are the same. As Keele and Titiunik describe, this "poses a serious challenge if the researcher is interested in only one of those treatments since, absent any restrictions or assumptions, it will not be possible to separate the effect of the treatment of interest on the outcome from the effect of all other 'irrelevant' treatments" (2015).

In order to eliminate the issue of compound treatments, this project isolates areas that are within the same county, state senate, and state legislative district, that also contain portions both within and outside of the 13th Congressional district. Fortunately all of the 13th district falls within the Philadelphia media market, and is therefore held constant. By holding all other relevant political boundaries constant, we are essentially controlling for the effects of these alternative boundaries. I am able to isolate 16 regions along the border of the 13th district that meet these characteristics: six in Philadelphia and ten in Montgomery County. This provides us with 68,021 registered Democrats in Philadelphia, respectively, and 113,184 in Montgomery County. Figure A1 provides an example of a region within Philadelphia County that is within the 3rd State Senate district and the 179th State House district. The light blue area represents areas within this geographic subset that is within the 13th Congressional district, while the darker blue is within the 2nd Congressional district, which importantly did not have a contested Democratic primary. Each small dot represents a household with a registered voter.

Figure A1: Example of Compound Treatment Reduction

Measuring Geographic Distance

In order to measure the distance between each voter and the discontinuity (the congressional district boundary), I first geocoded the registered address of the voters that fell

within these compound treatment reduction geographies. Less than 0.5% of voters were dropped because of incomplete addresses. Next, I converted the census provided shapefile of the district into a geometric polygon. From here I use the `geosphere` package in `R` to calculate the shortest geographic distance between each voter and the congressional district border. This package allows one to take into consideration the ellipsoidal shape of the earth when calculating geographic distance for greater accuracy.

Measuring Turnout

Voter turnout is measured as the percentage of registered voters recorded as voting either at the polling location or absentee. Because Pennsylvania is a closed primary state, turnout in the primary is measured only among registered Democrats.

Results

Table A1 provides the results of the geoRDD model for turnout in the primary. All models are estimated with the `rdrobust` package. The results present both the initial estimates and the estimates with fixed-effects for each compound reduction geography. The effective number of observations on each side of the threshold are also provided.

What is immediately apparent is the difference in outcomes between the counties. In Philadelphia there is roughly a 3% increase in turnout in the presence of a ground game operation. While 3% may seem modest given the race was eventually decided by an over 10 point margin, given that turnout in these sections was only 21%, that constitutes a 14% change in turnout. No such effect is observed in Montgomery County, where no discernible ground game occurred. Figure A2 provides this trend graphically.

Table A1: Primary Election Turnout of Democrats

County	Model	Estimate	Std. Err.	p-value	C.I.	F.E.
Philly	Conventional	0.023*	0.010	0.026	0.003, 0.042	X
	Bias-Corrected	0.028**	0.010	0.006	0.008, 0.047	X
	Robust	0.028*	0.011	0.016	0.005, 0.050	X
	Conventional	0.032**	0.011	0.003	0.011, 0.053	✓
	Bias-Corrected	0.037***	0.011	0.001	0.016, 0.058	✓
	Robust	0.037**	0.012	0.002	0.014, 0.060	✓
Eff. Obs.	10,498 — 10,438					
MontCo	Conventional	0.001	0.008	0.900	-0.014, 0.016	X
	Bias-Corrected	0.005	0.008	0.563	-0.011, 0.020	X
	Robust	0.005	0.009	0.604	-0.013, 0.021	X
	Conventional	-0.003	0.013	0.797	-0.020, 0.022	✓
	Bias-Corrected	0.001	0.013	0.955	-0.025, 0.026	✓
	Robust	0.001	0.013	0.955	-0.025, 0.027	✓
Eff. Obs.	16,860 — 45,897					

Figure A2: Primary Election Turnout of Philadelphia Democrats

Primary Election Turnout – Philly Democrats

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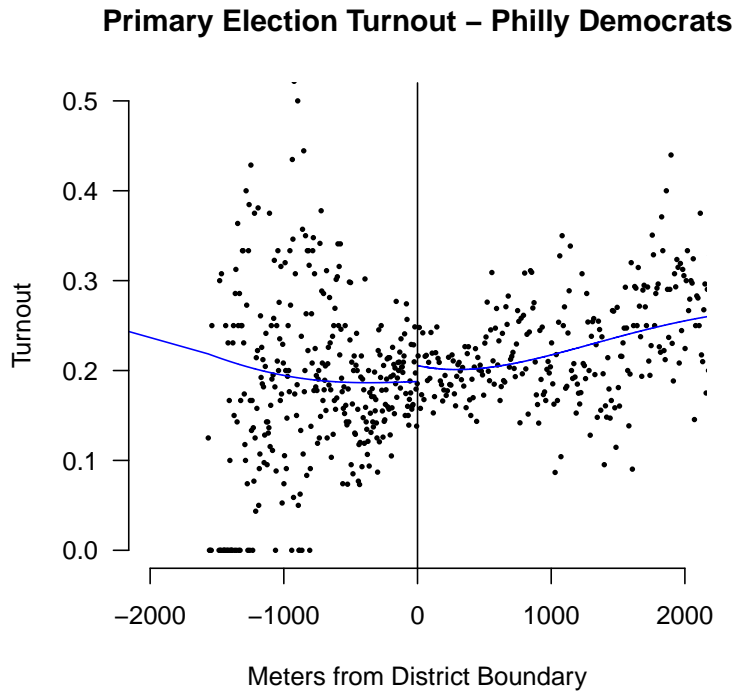
CHAPTER 4

Measuring Group Support

4.1   It's Hard to See into a Smoke-Filled Room

When Representative Rush Holt announced that he would not seek reelection to New Jersey's heavily Democratic 12th district in 2014, four candidates quickly filed to run for the Democratic nomination. In New Jersey, the county party's endorsement is *key* to nomination. Getting the endorsement comes with a preferential ballot placement – the county line – that all but guarantees the plurality of votes from that county.[1] State Sen. Linda Greenstein, State Rep. Upendra Chivukula, and State Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman were each endorsed by their respective county's Democratic party. Hoping to follow the same career path as Holt, Princeton physicist Andrew Zwicker ran as a scientist hoping to replace a scientist, but was not endorsed by any of the counties. On March 11, 2014, the three major candidates all met at Giovanna's Restaurant[2] in Plainfield, NJ to meet with the Democratic chairpeople of the three Union County towns in the 12th District – Assemblyman Jerry Green, Mayor Colleen Mahr, and Assemblywoman Linda Stender. In a private room in this Italian Restaurant the three party leaders determined who to endorse. "I think very highly of all three. In fact, I served with all three. It was a very tough decision" Green said, but in the end the committee decided on Watson Coleman (Spoto 2014). She would go on to win the nomination in no small part due to her 76% of the vote from Union County, and won the general election with

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[1]Those interviewed could think of only three instances in New Jersey history in which a candidate won nomination for any office without the support of the plurality of counties in that office's jurisdiction. My own research into congressional nominations has found no exceptions to the rule.

[2]Their website advertises a 'Party Meeting Room' for "small weddings, parties, and get-togethers." The political scientist in me hopes that this was the type of *party* they had in mind. As part of my 'soak and poke' method, I visited Giovanna's in the summer of 2015. I'd recommend the stuffed mushrooms.

only nominal opposition.

In the same year across the Rockies, Republican Mia Love had her eyes set on Utah's 4th district. Having lost to Democrat Jim Matheson by fewer than 800 votes in 2012, Love was considered the favorite for the GOP nomination following Matheson's decision to retire. Some in the party were concerned that the dysfunctions of Love's previous campaign would keep her from taking back the heavily Republican seat. In her previous campaign, she had three different campaign managers, occasionally missed events due to scheduling errors, and according to some party officials had trouble developing a message beyond national talking points (Rolly 2014). These concerns aside, Love recieved 78% of the delegates at the Utah Republican convention – beating her opponent, Utah's Director of Business and Economic Development Bob Fuehr, and finishing above the threshold needed to avoid a primary.[3] With the nomination, Love went on to easily win the general election in a wave Republican year.

These more visible examples of party strength have generally become the exception to the rule. Only Connecticut, Utah, and Virginia still use party conventions with any regularity, and only the handful of counties in New Jersey have party organizations with such unilateral ability to shape primaries. The smoke-filled rooms and convention halls of political lore may be largely gone, but the party's ability to influence the selection of their nominees is far from it. In Chapter 3, I provided case studies from the 2014 primary election cycle detailing how elements of the extended party network use its resources to push their chosen candidates toward nomination.

But data on these individual resources are usually much more difficult to gather than a candidate's ballot placement or the vote counts from a party convention. In this chapter, I summarize the resources made available to candidates with the support of networks associated with the parties' respective groups. I also described how difficult measuring these resources can be. I then develop an original measure – existing network density (END) scores – that can more generally asses the presence of organized support. Finally, I provide some initial diagnostics on this measure to suggest that the relationship between network support

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[3]In Utah, a candidate can bypass a primary election in Utah if they obtain 60 percent or more of the vote during their convention.

and electoral prospects is not endogenous to canddiate viability. The measure developed in this chapter will be the focus of the analysis presented in the chapters to follow.

4.2   Network Resources

The support of organized interests within the larger party network can provide candidates with a variety of resources. The types of resources that can be used on behalf of particular candidates is often predicated by the type of group or interest supporting that candidate. As mentioned in the conclusion of the previous chapter, a group like EMILY's List may provide campaign staffers for a candidate, but have no formal powers of the nomination process in each district. The national parties, unwilling to appear heavy handed and step on the toes of local organizations, rarely make endorsements in a competitive primary, but may funnel resources to their preferred candidates behind the scenes (Hassell 2016; 2018). Local party organizations may have access to all of the potential resources, but rarely possess the massive budgets of their national counterparts necessary to implement them. Morover the idiosyncrasies of particular districts may make different resources more or less effective in particular races.

These group resources – campaign advice, field management, get out the vote efforts, endorsements, and financial support – have all been demonstrated as influential resources in primary contests (Cain 2013; Desmarais et al. 2015; Dominguez 2011; Hassell 2016; 2018; Ocampo 2017), but they vary in the ease with which scholars can observe them (see Bawn et al. 2012). The efforts of party actors to shape the field by encouraging particular candidates to run or dissuading others are the most difficult resource to observe directly. These internal decisions are often publicly kept from the public eye. Providing campaign management training and campaign workers is slightly more visible, but is still difficult to observe systematically. Endorsements are a resource that benefits from being publicly disseminated as wide as possible, but the lack of a central repository of endorsements or a pre-determined universe of potential endorsers makes collecting these data difficult. The strict financial reporting requirements, in comparison, makes the financial support of a candidate

much more easy to observe. That said, there is sometimes some ambiguity as to who is supporting the groups that are conducting independent expenditures. And of course the nomination of a candidate by the formal party is the most visible, albeit the least common.

4.2.1 Recruitment, Dissuasion, and Field Shaping

Recruitment and discouragement of candidates is one of the most important predictors of candidate emergence and success (Carnes 2018; Fowler and McClure 1989; Lawless and Fox 2005). While central to the prospects of would-be candidates, these behind the scene efforts by interest groups and party organizations are extremely difficult to measure systematically. Schwartz (1990) noted efforts by the Illinois business community to dissuade a candidate from challenging their preferred candidate. Masket (2009) describes the roles of 5 "informal party organizations" in California and their attempts to recruit candidates and dissuade others from seeking party nominations. Ocampo (2017) demonstrates the impact of political networks and interest group support on the emergence and electoral success of Latino candidates in plurality-Latino open seat primary races.

In many of the 2014 cases, primary candidates have described receiving pressure, sometimes explicitly, to run or to reconsider running from party leaders, interest groups, and other elected officials. In Pennsylvania's 13th district, the weakness of the Montgomery County Democratic Party in comparison to it's Philadelphia counterpart, helps explain why Boyle was able to benefit from his geographic monopoly in the city. In Louisiana's 6th district, Grigsby's ability to convince candidates against running (or in some cases encouraging them to run as spoilers) can shape the field to the advantage of his chosen candidates. The lack of a network in North Carolina's 12th district prevented the candidates from Charlotte from coordinating on a single candidate. The "switcheroo" in Colorado's 4th district, organized by the national Republican Party, benefited the electoral prospects of the party in two contests. Who runs is as important as who doesn't in multi-candidate races like open-seat primaries.

But heavy handed attempts by party officials to shape the field can have also be detrimental to a candidate's prospects. "Meddling" Marcel Groen's efforts in Pennsylvania's 6th

districts raised the ire of party activists. In this case, the activists organized in support of a candidate they knew to be "one of us", circumventing the party's preferred candidate and endorsing Trivedi. More recently, the DCCC's efforts to wade into a primary to pressure Laura Moser out of Texas's 7th district's Democratic primary may have had the unintended effect of galvanizing her supporters and pushing her support high enough to make it into the summer runoff (Bowman 2018).

4.2.2 Training and Campaign Management

Another resource available to candidates within the the party network is campaign staff and advisers. In Hassell's (2016) interviews of party officials, one individual noted that "the smart campaign people get behind the party's candidate and there's no one left for the candidate that wants to challenge the party's candidate." As political campaigns have become a billion dollar industry, professional campaign consultants have become central players in the party network (Herrnson 2009; Robbins 2017) and successful campaign strategies are often shared through these connections (Nyhan and Montgomery 2015). While nothing prevents candidates from hiring their own talented staff, the task of finding staff for an insurgent campaign can become exceedingly difficult. Moreover, access to party-centric consultants has been shown to increase a candidates electoral prospects (Cain 2013).

These campaign staffers and advisers vary in their thoroughness and effectiveness, but can be tremendously involved in primary elections. On Democratic activist described the candidate training used by a major interest group:

> "The Thursday training lasted from 8am to 6pm, and they worked through meals...trainers went through every aspect of a campaign in no-nonsense, intense workshops. The began with how to get your personal life ready for a campaign: work, family, internet presence, etc. Then they coached candidates about using their strengths in choosing a first office, i.e. teachers for school board. Next they walked through all the paper work involved in launching a campaign, filing, opening campaign accounts, etc. Next campaign launch, slogans vs. messaging, websites, speaking in public, etc. Next they developed fundraising plans (there is another weekend training just about raising money). They spoke about the chronology of successful campaigns, when to fundraise, when to spend and on

what. Finally, they walked through a successful GOTV [get out the vote] field operation and election week activities (POG)."

While these trainings are focused more at first-time candidates for lower offices, interest group leaders and party activists told us that in these open-seat congressional primaries they would "sit at [the candidate's] kitchen table and help them layout the entire campaign."

Maintaining a professional campaign operation is difficult, even for electoral veterans. One journalistic account of Marjorie Margolies campaign noted:

"Throughout the spring, she's declined to participate in three debates that the rest of the candidates attended. In the two debates she has shown up to, she's been criticized for reading canned answers off index cards. While Leach and Brendan Boyle have been airing ads since April 22nd, the Margolies campaign only ran its first TV spot last Wednesday during the Flyers game. The "Whats the deal with Marjorie" impression was captured well by an April Fools Day post on Politics PA that compared her campaign presence to the infamous missing Malaysian airplane" (Van Zuylen-Wood 2014).

This example only reiterates the importance this network resource – campaign organization and support – can provide even the most experienced candidate.

4.2.3 Ground Game and GOTV Efforts

In numerous studies, electoral activities on Election Day have been shown to aid candidates in their pursuit of nomination. Miller, Bositis, and Baer (1981) found large effects for mail, telephone, and canvassers on primary election turnout. Gerber, Green, and Larimer (2008) found evidence that non-partisan and interest group mailers can increase turnout in primaries. Arceneaux and Nickerson (2009) reanalyze 11 turnout field experiments and conclude that in-person contact generally has a positive impact on voter turnout in a variety of contexts. While nothing prevents electoral "self-starters" from delivering mailers, knocking on doors, and calling supporters on behalf of their own campaigns, research suggests that efforts made by advocacy groups are at least (Panagopolous 2008) if not more effective (Gerber and Green 2017), particularly in the low-information environments (Arceneaux and Kolodny 2009), like primary campaigns.

Lacking the driving cue of party identification, primary voters are also more open to persuasion than voters in general elections. Primary voters have been found lack sufficient information about candidates to make ideological distinctions between candidates (DeMora et al. 2014; Citrin Ahler and Lenz 2013). In a field experiment involving primary campaign mailers, Gerber (2004) found that the "incumbent's vote margin was increased by approximately 2.7% of the total number of registered voters in those wards that received the campaign mailings." This was in comparison to statistically insignificant 0.2% in the general election. Arceneaux (2007) found that "[b]oth the door-to-door canvassing and commercial phone bank efforts increased support for the candidate among subjects in the survey sample" of primary voters in an open-seat primary for county commissioner.

Existing organizations within a party's network often have infrastructure in place making these efforts more efficient and effective than when conducted by individual campaigns. EMILY's List's strategic use of mailers in Michigan's 14th district was credited with giving Brenda Lawrence a slight advantage among absentee voters. But EMILY's List did not need to find vendors, design the mailers, and send them to voters because they had existing partnerships with Moxie Media and the Pivot Group – two Democratic consulting firms specializing in direct mail campaigns. In 2014, EMILY's LIst hired these two firms for the mailing campaigns in California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Michinga, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. This frequent collaboration gives these organizations a slide edge with cost efficiency and effectiveness of mailers. The IBEW's ground game operation on behalf of the Boyle campaign increased turnout in the city by between 2 and 6% (see Appendix 3A). One official close to the unions reported the IBEW had 10-20 people each weekday and nearly 50 people on the weekends making phone calls, knocking on doors, passing out literature, and serving as a central hub for smaller unions to coordinate their own political outreach. The manpower that the unions are able to marshal given their membership likely far exceeds the number of volunteers even an impressive campaign could amass. After speaking with insiders close to all four campaigns, it is likely that the unions had more boots on the ground than all four candidates' campaigns combined. Again, while nothing prevents individual candidates from running effective ground campaigns, the experience and existing infrastructure of

many actors within the party networks provides efficiency gains for candidates in nomination contests.

4.2.4 Endorsements and Voting Cues

Network support can send a signal of in-group status to other donors and voters. Explicit endorsements, are perforce only available to candidates with the support of some element of the party network. In *The Party Decides*, Cohen et al. (2008) argue that pre-primary endorsements allowed the party elites to coordinate behind and nominate their chosen presidential candidates. Hannagan et al. (2010) finds mixed results for the electoral benefits of an EMILY's List endorsement – electoral long-shots benefit significantly, while there is a more ambiguous impact for high quality candidates. Two studies found that Oprah's endorsement of Obama increased both turnout and support for Obama in the 2008 Democratic primary (Garthwaite and Moore 2013; Pease and Brewer 2008). Dominguez (2011) finds that a candidate's share of the endorsements from a primary race significantly increases the candidate's vote share, even controlling for a battery of other measures of candidate success. Shaw, de la Garza, and Lee (2000) find that Latino group endorsements often increase turnout among Latino voters. Endorsements have been shown as important heuristics to attentive (Lau and Redlawsk 2001) and low-information voters (Arceneaux and Kolodny 2009; Lupia 1994) alike. In sum, endorsements are an electoral resource that provides candidates with a tangible benefit.

Just as a donation from Lane Grigsby was a "sign of legitimacy" to business-oriented conservatives, and the support of Bill Schutte could signal that a candidate was "the right one" for "Team Midland," and the backing of the IBEW could remind union members to "vote their job," so too can networks more generally signal to sympathetic audiences that this candidate is "one of us" and worthy of support. Given the lack of party identification as a voting cue and the limited information available to voters in primaries, the signal of network support can be a powerful tool for the party faithful and political activists in primary contests even without a formal endorsement.

4.2.5 Formal Powers

One unique tool available to some local parties are the formal legal tools to either select or stack the deck in favor of their preferred candidates. It may seem tautological, but as far as resources with the potential to influence the selection of a nominee go, the formal power to select the nominee or the ability to shape the election to one candidate's benefit is hard to beat. In Tennessee, for example, the state Republican party can remove candidates from the primary ballot that the state party committee believes are not "bona fide" Republicans (Rau 2018). In action, this allowed Marsha Blackburn to win the Republican nomination for the Senate contest without opposition. Whether this is the ability of party conventions to select nominees, the luxury of choice in terms of nomination procedures, the ability to control ballot access, or preferential ballot placement – parties, and the networks that control them, that have access to these tools are powerful forces in primary elections.

4.2.6 Financial Support

The most common resource that campaign networks provide their candidates is financial support. Networked contributions provides efficiency gains for candidates fundraising efforts. The support of a single actor can signal to other donors that this candidate deserves their support. Even with campaign finance limits, the support of Lane Grigsby in Louisiana can come with as much a $1,000,000 from his network of marine construction executives. Once the IBEW endorsed Boyle, most of the Philadelphia trade unions followed suit. Bill Schutte's support of John Moolenaar tapped into a durable network of contributors who had long supported the "Midland Team."

The close relationships between major donors and the party network also allows the network to "starve out the competition" by signaling that a candidate is on the outside. The unions and the Levin network in Michigan and the IBEW in Philadelphia are a prime examples of this strategy – by supporting their candidates fully and early, they signaled to the rest of the field who to get behind. In this way they used their financial support to both directly assist a particular candidate, but to also keep other potential competitors on the

sidelines.

Groups within the party network can also support candidates through their own efforts – independent expenditures – far exceeding the legal limits for direct contributions. In 2014, EMILY's List's independent expenditure arm, Women Vote!, alone spent over $800,000 on behalf of five candidates in open-seats primaries. This includes the nearly $300,000 and $250,000 spent on mailers supporting Brenda Lawrence in Michigan and Alma Adams in North Carolina. The magnitude of financial support available to candidates with the support of party network actors far exceeds what is available outside the network.

And most central to this analysis, organized contributing is a resource available to all types of actors within the extended party network. A group may lack the numbers for boots on the ground mobilization or the public presence for a valuable endorsement, they may not have the budgets for large independent expenditures or the formal powers to nominate a candidate, but all networks, by their nature as an organized group, have a set of individuals who can be called upon to donate to and support candidates for office. In this way organized campaign contributions are the most universal, if conservative, signal of group support.

4.3   Difficulties Measuring Group Support

Organized group support of primary candidates helps drive electoral success. Groups have this influence through their ability to marshal electoral resources on behalf of their chosen candidate – resources often unavailable to a 'free-agent' candidate. However, as Hassell (2016) notes, most of these studies have either focused solely on presidential nominations (Cohen et al. 2008), been forced to rely on a small number of cases (Dominguez 2011; Masket 2009), or only considered general elections (Desmarais et al. 2015; Hannagan et al. 2010) because of the intractability of gathering the data systematically for a representative sample of primaries. In discussing the difficulties in measuring the impact of party efforts on primary outcomes, Dominguez (2011) admits the need for "other proxies" as other measures of party influence are "cumbersome to gather for large numbers of candidates."

Consider the difficulties in measuring endorsements. Dominguez (2011) relies on a

survey of candidates in 2002 open-seat congressional primaries to systematically measure the endorsements they received. Assuming that candidates' endorsements did not impact their likelihood of responding to the survey, it still leaves many races without observations due to non-response. The relatively few observations limited the author's ability to address the role of electoral competition on the influence of endorsements in primaries and prevented her ability to generalize beyond that election cycle. Endorsements are also extremely difficult to measure retrospectively. Dominguez found "that about half the time the candidate had received at least some endorsements that were not listed on the Web page" and had to be confirmed through direct contact with the campaign. This direct contact would constitute a massive undertaking to gather for a larger sample of races. Looking at endorsements from the perspective of the groups would be just as difficult. The universe of potential endorsing groups is often unknown beforehand, and determining their behavior in retrospect often misses activity. As Hassell notes in his analysis of EMILY's List endorsements, endorsing "groups tend to scrub their institutional memories of any candidates which they supported that lose the election" (2018, p. 75, fn. 32). Similarly, the Library of Congress's "United States Elections Web Archive" tends to maintain only the websites of those candidates who won the primary. For example, Brendan Boyle's website is archived, while Val Arkoosh, Daylin Leach, and Marjorie Margolies are not. These limitations together make the effects endorsements – a resource campaigns have an incentive to make visible – difficult to observe.

The difficulties in gathering the data on endorsements pale in comparison to the task of systematically gaining access to the more opaque (and at times objectionable) aspects of network support. With national parties hesitant to appear heavy-handed in local races, records of staff and consulting assistance are often buried in financial disclosures and not widely reported (see Cain 2013). The informal, behind-the-scenes politicking of party elites to encourage and discourage candidates from running is often purposefully kept out of the public eye (Bawn et al. 2014). Given how central recruitment and discouragement are in the decision to run for office, its inscrutable nature handicaps our ability to understand party network influence nomination contests more generally.

The case studies from the preceding chapter further highlight these difficulties. Recall

Pennsylvania's 13th district, for example. The field shaping efforts by party officials from both counties, national political figures and the labor unions played a significant and perhaps deterministic role in the outcome of the primary. But even after considerable primary source research and dozens of interviews, some of the finer details about why certain candidates ran and others did not remains unclear. For example, Rep. Mark Cohen's (another labor-affiliated state legislator) failure to mount a serious campaign and eventual endorsement of Boyle was seen by interview subjects as evidence of union's pressuring candidates to keep the Philadelphia field open for Boyle. But no one with direct knowledge of this decision agreed to speak with me. To further complicate the story, while in an interview Saidel openly admitted to dropping out when asked to by the Clintons, multiple staffers from other campaigns suggested that Saidel, closely affiliated with Bob Brady, initially filed to run only to keep Boyle out of the race and dropped out when Boyle announced his campaign anyway. And given Brady's simultaneous endorsement of Boyle and staffing of Margolies' campaign, muddies the direct benefit of a fairly clear endorsement. These examples further highlight the difficulties in systematically observing the purposely clandestine behaviors of party actors.

The various incentives, motivations, and tools available to different types of groups within the party network provide one last obstacle for the measuring of group support generally. Lacking a theory of which group resources should be more important than others, researchers would need to gather data systematically on *all* avenues of possible support, or develop an alternative measure that detects group support more generally. Having observed numerous races first hand, it is unlikely that a single resource universally dominates all others. And having attempted to gather *all* information systematically for only a handful of races, that route would be herculean if not impossible for a larger sample. In the next section, I propose a network-based method to systematically measure the presence of group support in primary campaigns that would be present for candidates with party network support, but unavailable to those without it.

4.4 Groups in the Extended Party Network

It is natural to think of organized interests within political parties in terms of networks of supporters. Interest groups regularly see themselves as individuals connected through their collective political goals, like EMILY's List, which describes their founding as "25 women, rolodexes in hand, gathered in Ellen R. Malcolm's basement to send letters to their friends about *a network they were forming* to raise money for pro-choice Democratic women candidates" (EMILY's List 2017, emphasis added). The EMILY's List operation has come quite far since these more humble beginnings (running candidate training and recruiting seminars, staffing and organizing individual campaigns, spending millions of dollars per election cycle on dozens of races, etc.), but the basic network structure remains. When EMILY's List supports a candidate, the first resource made available is their network of supporters. In Brenada Lawrence's primary campaign, over $70,000 or 15% of her fundraising came from EMILY's List donors. This dynamic is not confined to EMILY's List. Hassell (2018) reports that for a range of interest groups, including EMILY's List, the Sierra Club, Club for Growth, and the Campaign for Working Families, that an endorsement increases the number donations from group supporters. In other words, candidates with the support of these organizations were more likely to tap into their network of contributors.

Moreover, a network-based view of organized interests allows for the consideration of politically active groups that lack the established PAC infrastructure of most interest groups. Built over decades of work in the maritime construction, Cajun Industries founder Lane Grigsby developed a large network of political active executives and business managers. When activated his network can by his own estimates raise between $100,000 and $1,000,000 in individual donations depending on what a race requires. One analysis found that between 2009 and 2012, Grigsby, his family, his companies and key employees made 423 contributions totaling nearly $1.3 million (Zurik 2017). Grigsby also interviews and vets potential candidates, channels money into independent expenditure campaigns on behalf of his supported candidates, and rallies public support behind policies important to him (Kunzelman 2016; Spencer 2015). This network has no official name, no office on K Street, and no formal lead-

ership roles, but still holds significant influence in Louisiana Republican politics. If parties are the networks of organized interests attempting to gain control of government, then any measure that excludes the efforts of network's like Grigsby's misses a significant electoral resource.

Many scholars have attempted to measure the impact of political networks on candidates' electoral prospects. Desmarais et al. (2015) construct networks of candidates based on PAC contributions to their campaigns in the general election. Candidates are considered tied within that network if they have a PAC contributor in common. They find that challengers located within the extended party network had better general election prospects than those candidates on the periphery of the network. Importantly, these results persist after controlling for campaign resources and candidate quality. They argue that the support of the party network sends a signal to voters that these candidates will faithfully represent the interests of their party coalition. These authors present these results as evidence that parties are still able to shape electoral outcomes. However, by focusing on general elections, these authors are unable to directly address whether parties are able to choose their nominees in the first place.

Ocampo (2017) systematically looks at the impact of group support on the primary prospects of candidates in districts with large Latino populations. Using a dataset of Latino and non-Latino candidates running in all open seats from 2004 to 2014 in congressional districts with a Latino population of at least 15 percent, including 367 candidates from forty-six congressional contests, the author finds that a candidate's share of PAC and party contributions has a positive and significant impact on the likelihood of winning an open-seat primary. She concludes that the effect "group-level support has on electoral success is quite meaningful as it substantially increases the chances of Latino candidates winning their respective primary."

This analysis provides many contributions to our understanding of party network support in primaries. By focusing on open seats it effectively overcomes many problems that looking at incumbents raises. In gathering data for a large number of races systematically, the findings are more easily generalizable to other contexts. The work is admittedly focused

on the role of political networks and interest groups on minority representation, and thus focuses only on races in districts with sizable Latino populations. Her findings on the importance of group support, therefore, may or may not apply to other types of districts. Nor does she consider the extent to which individual candidate qualities, namely prior elected office, play in the potentially endogenous relationship of network support and electoral outcomes. While clearly addressed in the case studies, her empirical analysis does not address whether the sizable effect of PAC contributions is driven by PACs contributing to those candidates who are most likely to win or if the contributions driving candidates on to victory.

In his analysis of primary elections, Hassell finds that candidates for the Senate (2016; 2018) and the House (2018) benefit significantly from party network support. Using the number of donors that a primary candidate shares with their national party congressional fundraising committee (i.e. the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee for Democratic primary candidates for Congress, etc.) as his measure of party support, he finds that this count predicts which candidates will drop out of the contest before the primary and which candidates will go on to become the nominee. He argues that this "measure of party support is an excellent proxy for a [party] endorsement" (2015, fn. 10).

He also directly addresses the issue of causality. He demonstrates through the use of a Granger causality test that early party support drove future fundraising success (his measure of electoral viability) and party support, but that early fundraising success did not drive later party support. With this evidence he concludes that party supporters are not simply bandwagoning onto the campaigns of successful candidates. He supplements these empirical findings with qualitative interviews from party operatives to support his conclusion that party support drives and does not follow electoral success.

However, even though Hassell cites the literature on the extended party network extensively, his measure is derived from the behavior of donors to the national party organizations, limiting his reach to only those actors connected to the center of the network. As Rauch and La Raja point out in their *Brookings* report on activist groups, the interest groups and activists that constitute the majority of the extended party are "organizing in regions where party organizations lack resources *or incentives* to invest," leaving the formal parties to focus

their efforts on competitive races (2017, p. 3, emphasis added). This fits with much of what we observed in the field. In our overview of the 2014 cycle, we found very little evidence of coordination or cooperation across the party network, and more often observed free-for-all contests among the many party factions within a district (Bawn et al. 2015). The national parties were rarely involved in safe-seat contests, and these safe-seats constituted the majority of open-seats in that cycle. This could contribute to Hassell's more qualified findings in the House – whereas he finds that the share of party donors predicts which candidates will remain in and which candidates will win in *all* Senate primaries, he finds a similar effect only for House races in competitive districts where the candidates have the same electoral experience (2018, p. 124). It is not that parties are only active in competitive House primaries, it is that different components of the extended party network are active in different electoral environments – the national party focused on seats that will be competitive in the general election, with the remainder of the extended party network focusing on the majority of seats safe for one party.

Candidates with access to the contribution networks of groups within the extended party network will be the candidates most likely to receive the campaign resources exclusive to organized support. Different organizations undoubtedly pursue different strategies when utilizing campaign resources, but all of these groups use their network of supporters to direct campaign contributions to their preferred candidates. While not all candidates with the support of networked contributors will have additional benefits of group support, all candidates with those benefits should have the support of their network. In that light, this should be seen as a systematic, yet conservative estimate of group support.

4.5   Measuring Support through Donor Networks

To test the hypothesis that extended party support is driving the electoral prospects of primary contenders, a more tractable measure of organized group support is needed that is both accessible for a representative sample of races and takes into consideration the different electoral environments in which the party network could operate. Ideally this measure

would demonstrate the degree of organization within a particular candidate's coalition of supporters. By conceptualizing the extended party as a network of groups and individuals who consistently work together in their party's primary, I can then use the structure of a candidate's contribution network to infer the nature of a particular campaign's supporters. More specifically, I will argue that the density of a candidate's contribution network can serve as a proxy for the degree to which durable and cohesive elements of the extended party network have invested in a candidate's campaign.

While fundraising successes and candidate quality are important characteristics for electoral victory, candidates with the support of individuals and organizations that frequently cooperate in their party's primary are those candidates most likely to have access to the aforementioned campaign resources beyond the reach of the "free-booting" political entrepreneur. In addition, while the various resources and motives of groups may push them to pursue different electoral efforts on behalf of their candidate, the support of any group will direct contributions to their preferred candidates from their group members. Even groups like anesthesiologists, not the traditional politically active interest groups, are likely to coordinate their donations like they did for one of their own, Valerie Arkoosh, in PA-13. While not all candidates with the support of networked contributors will have additional benefits of group support, all candidates with those benefits should have the support of their network.

4.5.1 Network Density

But what is network density? Density is a measure of overall connectedness within a network (Scott 2017). A network's density is defined as the fraction of the total possible number of ties within a network that occur within the network. This statistic ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 would be a network in which no actors are tied to one another and 1 would have every actor tied to every other actor. Formally, if

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} - & a_{12} & \cdots & a_{1n} \\ a_{21} & - & \cdots & a_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ a_{n1} & a_{n2} & \cdots & - \end{bmatrix}$$

is an **n** x **n** adjacency matrix for **n** donors where

$$a_{ij} = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if donor i and donor j contributed to the same candidate} \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \\ -, & \text{if i=j (no self-ties)} \end{cases}$$

then

$$\text{density}(A) = \frac{\sum\limits_{i=1}^{n}\sum\limits_{j=1}^{n} a_{ij}/2}{n(n-1)/2}.$$

For example, consider the network graph in Figure 4.1. Network graphs provide visual representations of relationships between different actors. Actors are referred to as "nodes" and the connections between these actors as "ties" or "edges." In the context of this project, the actors involved are campaign donors, and the ties between them determined by whether or not they contributed to the same candidate. Below, nodes are represented as points on the graph which are considered tied if connected by a solid dark line. In this hypothetical network of six donors, there are nine ties out of a possible fifteen. The density of this network is therefore $\frac{9}{15} = 0.6$.

The generalized concept of network density has obvious implications for the study of organized groups with contribution networks. Individuals associated with groups are likely to give to the same sets candidates over election cycles as they receive the cue of support from their respective groups. This would result in dense, durable networks of donors with

Figure 4.1: An Illustration of Network Density
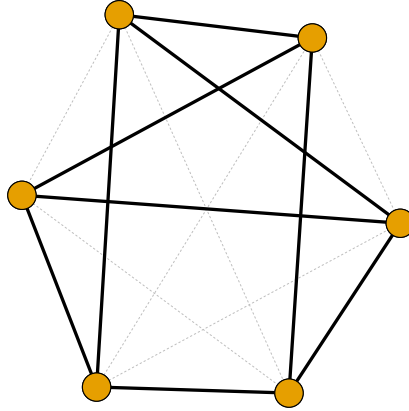
consistent patterns of contributions. In comparison, individual donors who are mobilized by individual campaigns may be equally likely to give in the future, but less likely to share similar patterns of contribution overtime given the ad hoc nature of their initial activation.

4.5.2 Existing Network Density

To construct each candidate's donor network, I compile a list of every donor who made a contribution to a House candidate during the primary (t_1). For each donor in this list, I then find every donation they made in the previous election cycle (t_0). While I again limit these contributions to those made in the primary, I include all non-presidential federal contributions. I next construct a network where these donors are connected to each other if they donated to the same candidate in this prior primary cycle (t_0). Finally, I calculate that network's density – the ratio of the ties within the network to the number of possible ties for a network of that size. This value is a candidate's existing network density (END) score.

Candidates who score higher on this measure are those whose supporters frequently work together in their party's primary. I focus on the behavior of donors in the election cycle prior

in order to establish that these donors are not simply re-election coalitions pulled together in a particular election by a particular candidate. By demonstrating that these donors have consistent patterns of giving over time, I can show that these networks are organized and durable. And because this analysis focuses on open-seat contests, I can conclude that these networks were organized prior to an individual becoming a candidate for that office.

Figure 4.2: Calculating A Candidate's Existing Network Density
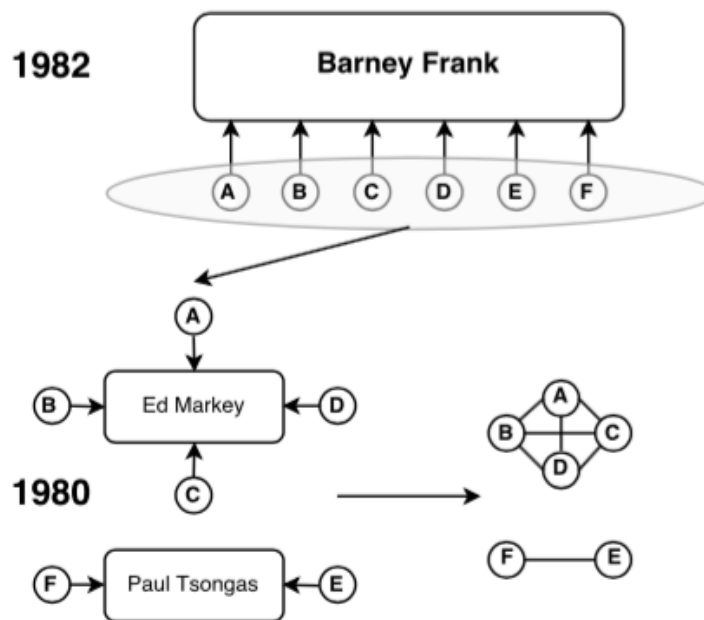
Note: In the first row, six contributors donate to Barney Frank in 1982. In the second row, the behavior of these six donors in the prior election cycle is described, and then converted into a network where donors are tied if they share a common campaign to which they contributed.

Figure 4.2 provides another visual example of how this measure is calculated. Imagine that donors A, B, C, D, E, and F contributed to Barney Frank during the 1982 primary. To determine the existing network density of Frank's contribution network, I would first determine what contributions these contributors made in the 1980 primary cycle. For this example, lets assume that contributors A, B, C, and D contributed to Ed Markey and

donors E and F contributed to Paul Tsongas. In this case, donors A, B, C, and D would be connected, and donors E and F would be connected. This would create seven ties in a network of six actors. If every donor in a six member network was connected, this would result in 15 ties. Therefore the END score for this network would be $\frac{7}{15}$ or ≈ 0.47.

Figure 4.3: Distribution of Existing Network Density (END) Scores
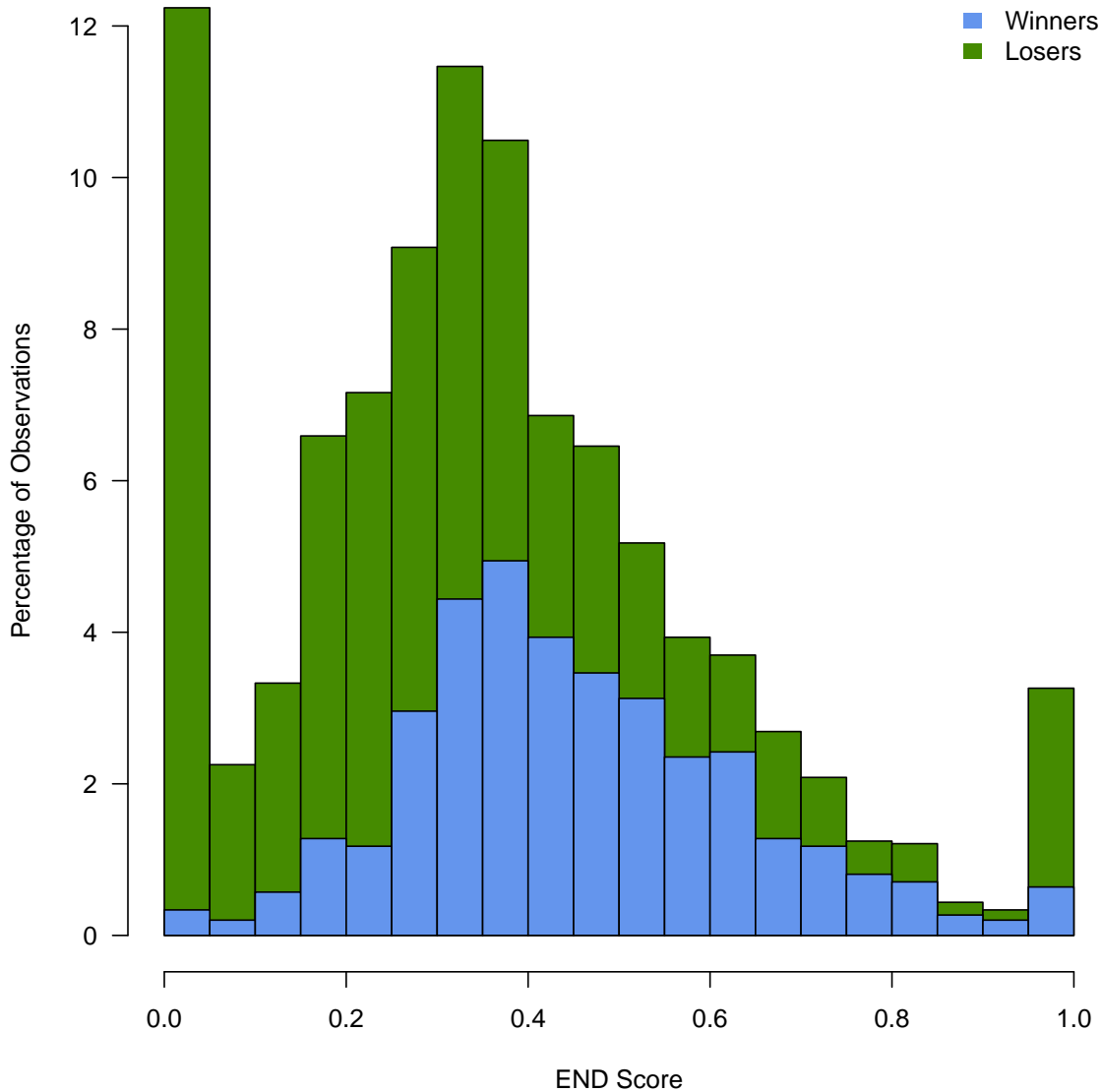
Figure 4.3 provides a histogram of END scores for candidates who raised primary funds

in consequential open-seats between 1982 and 2014. The green bars represent the share of those candidates that lost their primary, whereas the blue bars are those who won. The distribution is roughly symmetric, with a slight right skew, and a disproportionate number of candidates with network densities of 0 or 1. Those candidates with network densities of 0 often had no donor activity in the previous cycle, whereas those candidates with density of 1 often had very small networks. While theoretically these observations are valid, the results presented in the proceeding chapters hold if these outliers are omitted.

4.5.3 Limitations and Alternatives

Some limitations of network density as a measure should be discussed. First, the measure is not sensitive to variations in the cohesiveness with the structure of a network. The networks presented in Figure 4.4 have identical measures of density, but obviously different structures. The network in the first row consists of three densely connected communities – distinct sub-groups within a larger network – whereas the network in the second row consists of one larger, but more sparsely connected network. While future work could consider the differences between many small, cohesive groups and one larger less connected group, at this point the exploration would be exploratory, lacking a theoretically based hypothesis for which network structure should be more beneficial to a candidate.

This raises a second and related concern. Measures of network density are sensitive to the size of a network. In social networks, this makes comparing the density of networks of different sizes difficult (Scott 2017). For example, there is likely a limit to the time and energy individuals can spend maintaining social relationships. Therefore the theoretic maximum density of a network decreases as does the size of the network. In fact, Mayhew and Levinger (1978) use models of random choice to suggest that for large social networks, the maximum density value likely to be found is closer to 0.5.

But unlike social relations, donor patterns are less exhaustive in expectation because of how they are constructed. Given that donors are tied through their donations to other

Figure 4.4: Network Structure and Density

Network Density 0.28

Network Density 0.28
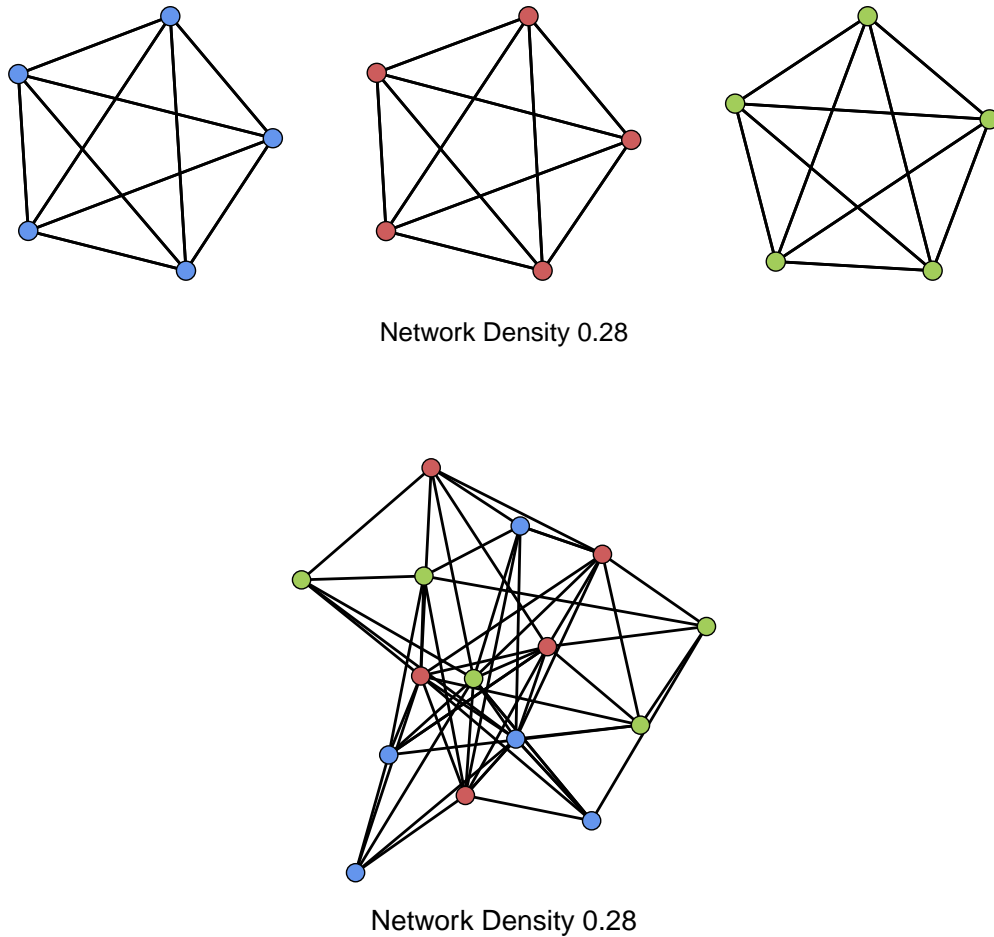
candidates, they are in a sense indirectly tied.[4] Individual donors are not directly inter-
acting with one another. A single action – all the contributors donating to one campaign
in the previous cycle – could bind the entire network. Therefore the amount of time and
energy needed to maintain a large, dense donor network is far less than the organizational
requirements for similar levels of density among a traditional social network. While there
is no single agreed upon method for comparing densities across various sizes, one common

[4]In network analysis, this is considered a bi-partite or two-mode network – a network wherein the ties
between actors are mediated by their actions toward another set of actors.

approach is to weight the networks by the number of actors. In the analyses to follow, I therefore interact the density measures with the number of donors in the network.

Density is not the only measure that summarizes the structure of a network. For example, Desmarais et al. (2015) uses community detection methods to determine whether or not a challenger candidate is integrated within the extended party's general election contribution network. They find that those candidates included in the network fare better than their equally well-funded, but excluded counterparts. In the *Annual Review of Political Science*, Ward et al. (2011) describe 16 different "descriptive measures of complete graphs that captured key structural features of networks." However, common measures like betweenness, centrality, prestige, and homophily are all node-level measures, which in the context of this project would mean that the statistic is calculated for each individual *candidate* within the network. This project, however, is interested in the structure of the *contributors'* network. This requires a graph-level metric – and of such measures, network density is most closely paralleled in my theory of group support.

4.6   Dealing with Endogeneity

One obvious concern is that existing network density is not causing candidates to be more electorally successful, but that more viable and successful candidates attract the support of dense networks. Unfortunately, polling in congressional primaries is sparse and rarely conducted with the rigor required for academic consideration. Fundraising reports, however, are widely available and occur with the granularity necessary to analyze trends over time. Not to mention that fundraising success is one of the strongest predictors of primary elections for non-incumbents (Jacobson 1980). Therefore, I use a Granger test of causality between END scores and candidate fundraising to demonstrate that END scores are Granger-causing candidate viability and not the other way around. This technique is used by Hassell (2016; 2018) in his analyses of national party primary coordination.

Existing network density scores can be said to Granger-cause fundraising share if the lagged value predicts both future fundraising share and END scores, but the lagged value

of fundraising do not predict party support when both lagged values are included in the models (Hassell 2016; see Woolridge 2012). In other words, if early END scores predict future fundraising – a value we know to be endogenous and directly affected by a candidate's viability – but END scores at the end of the primary are not predicted by early fundraising successes, then we can conclude that END scores are not driven by early perceptions of a candidate's viability.

For these Granger causality tests, I only consider candidates seeking nominations in consequential open-seat contests. As the dependent variables in the model, I use the share of fundraising[5] and the END score for candidates based off of the donations made to their campaign in the last 90 days of the campaign. I then estimate models with three sets of lagged independent variables. I calculate the END scores and fundraising shares for candidates based on donations made more than 90, 180, and 360 days prior to primary day, as t-1, t-2, and t-3, respectively.

Table 4.1 provides the results of these Granger causality tests. As predicted, early fundraising advantages predict future fundraising advantages, as does the early support from dense networks predict future support from dense networks. More importantly, the results suggest that END scores Granger-cause candidate fundraising shares in the three months before primary day, in that early support from dense networks also predicts future fundraising share. This provides us with some evidence that network support is in fact driving the relationships, and not following perceptions of candidate viability. The results are most clear for donations made 90 and 180 days prior to the primary, but near conventional levels of significance even at a *year prior* to the primary when a large portion of the sample is missing – only about half of candidates have raised any funds a year prior to the primary (1869/3961).

These results conform with Hassell's (2016; 2018) findings, but also recent studies that have largely found donor motivations to be expressive rather than instrumental (Barber

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[5]In this model I use share of fundraising for ease of interpretation as it puts fundraising and END scores on the same scale. The findings hold if I instead use logged fundraising values. Logged fundraising is used in the models presented in Chapters 5 & 6 to allow for ease of comparison between this work and the existing literature. Here too the effects and certainty remain if fundraising shares are used instead.

Table 4.1: Granger Causality Tests of Fundraising Share and Party Support

	Fund Share	END Score	Fund Share	END Score	Fund Share	END Score
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
END_{t-1}	0.103***	0.530***				
	(0.026)	(0.016)				
Fund Share$_{t-1}$	0.619***	0.003				
	(0.014)	(0.008)				
END_{t-2}			0.108***	0.495***		
			(0.029)	(0.016)		
Fund Share$_{t-2}$			0.555***	0.005		
			(0.017)	(0.009)		
END_{t-3}					0.065†	0.406***
					(0.036)	(0.018)
Fund Share$_{t-3}$					0.401***	0.016
					(0.021)	(0.010)
Constant	0.123***	0.223***	0.150***	0.263***	0.234***	0.319***
	(0.023)	(0.014)	(0.025)	(0.014)	(0.032)	(0.016)
Observations	2,539	2,461	2,356	2,297	1,869	1,850
R^2	0.449	0.569	0.330	0.563	0.182	0.550
Adjusted R^2	0.446	0.566	0.325	0.559	0.175	0.546
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

†p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Notes: The dependent variables are fundraising share and END-score of the candidates during the last 90 days of the primary. The independent variables are the same metrics calculated based on donations before times t-1, t-2, and t-3, or 90 days, 180 days, and 360 days before the primary, respectively. All models include year fixed effects.

2016a; 2016b; Gimple, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz 2008). This is not to suggest that donors are not strategic. They are responsive to the competitiveness of the election (Hill and Huber 2017) and give more frequently in races with the potential to increase their party's seat share (Boatright 2013). However, they "appear to give out of desire to support causes they believe in rather than extract material benefits from politicians" (Albert et al. 2018). In sum, little evidence suggests that primary donors exhibit significant bandwagoning tendencies.

And, moreover, there are numerous examples of when durable, influential networks came in against the clear frontrunner. Consider Marjorie Margolies campaign. She had previous Congressional experience, name recognition, fundraising strength, early endorsements and TV ads with Bill Clinton. But groups like EMILY's List and Equality Pennsylvania, rather than follow the frontrunner, decided instead to sit out the race. And other groups, namely the unions, came out in support of her underdog opponent. This is not to suggest that there was not some bandwagoning present among some donors, only that it is not sufficiently present to prevent deviations toward Boyle by the unions, or encourage pro-choice and LGBT groups to participate. More generally, if bandwagoning was the dominant driver of network behavior, we would have anticipated seeing Margolies in PA-13, Mitchell in MI-4, Clarke in MI-14, Graham in NC-12, and Dietzel in LA-06 – all leaders in early public polling – to have had the support of the densest networks, but each was bested by their opponents. These examples will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 6, where I analyze the impact of END scores on a candidate's likelihood of winning a primary.

4.7   Summary

In most situations, parties have lost the ability to formally nominate candidates for office. But this is not to suggest that they are unable to influence the primary elections that select these nominees. Organized interests within the extended party network hold access to a variety of powerful resources, including field shaping pressures, campaign training and management, ground game and GOTV efforts, endorsements and persuasion campaigns, and financial support, that are often either unavailable or much more difficult to acquire for

candidates without the support of these network actors. Studying the systematic influence of these efforts, however, is difficult because gathering data on this diverse pool of resources is nearly impossible.

Therefore, I proposed a new measure – existing network density (END) scores – which measure the degree to which the financial supporters of a candidate have a history of cooperating in their party's primaries. Those candidates with high END scores have the support of donors who frequently work together in support of primary candidates. The consistency with which they cooperate signals organization, and that organization in turn signals membership within the extended party network. Those candidates with the support of individuals within the extended party network are those candidates most likely to have access to the diverse range of alternative resources which help propel them to the nomination.

One could easily question whether this measure of network support is simply endogenous: rather than causing a candidate to win, dense networks of supporters are simply bandwagoning behind candidates already bound for success. To alleviate those concerns, I present the results from a Granger causality test that suggests END scores Granger-cause fundraising success (a proxy for candidate viability). This, in conjunction with the anecdotal accounts of network behavior in the 2014 primary cycle, suggests that these networks are in fact the drivers of this relationship. In the following two chapters, I demonstrate how these networks have the ability to both shape the field of candidates that compete in the primary and to then help nominate the candidates whom they support.

CHAPTER 5

Clearing the Field

5.1 The Political Influence of Candidate Dissuasion

In primary elections, who runs is often as important as who does not. In Pennsylvania's 13th district, most insiders agreed that had only one of the candidates from Montgomery County – any one of them – squared off against Boyle, then they would have won the primary. But with three candidates dividing up the support in the suburban portion of the district, Brendan Boyle was able to win with 41% of the vote. Had Jon Saidel or Mark Cohen, two well known Philadelphia Democrats who had publicly explored running, actually competed, they likely would have siphoned off sufficient support from Philadelphia to throw the election to Margolies. A similar dynamic played out in North Carolina, where Alma Adams benefited from running against a divided pool of Charlotte-based candidates. Had the Charlotte political community been able to coordinate behind a single candidate, or had more non-Charlotte candidates pulled votes from Adams, she very likely would have failed to secure the nomination.

The outcomes of elections with three or more candidates are notoriously difficult to predict. These multi-candidate contests have been described as little different from "poorly designed lotteries" (Brady 1993). Even under the strict (perhaps implausible, see Schwartz 2011) assumptions of preference one-dimensionality, the addition of a third candidate creates instability. While multiple equilibrium patterns are possible (Denzau, Kats, and Slutsky 1985), "none of them are 'convergent' in the sense that we expect candidates to adopt positions toward the center of a distribution of voters" (Cooper and Munger 2000). As Brams (2008) demonstrates, "there are *no* positions in a two-candidate race...in which *at*

least one of the two candidates cannot be beaten by a third (or fourth) candidate." The structural instability of multi-candidate contests under plurality rule (as voting in nearly all U.S. elections uses) allows for the possibility of 'spoiler' candidates – those whose presence in the pool of candidates allows for the nomination of a candidate who would otherwise have lost (Bawn et al. 2015). Therefore, attempts to understand the outcome of a primary elections require an understanding of both the candidates and *potential* candidates.

Much of the scholarship on candidate emergence stresses the importance of the ambition of the individual office-seeker. Earlier work found that recruitment activities by the formal party were rather limited (Kazee and Thornberry 1990). Interviews and surveys of candidates found them to be primarily self-motivated (Kazee 1980; Maisel et al. 1990), finding the decision to run for office "extremely personal" (Herrnson 1988). Fowler (1993, p. 59) summarized the characterizations of this textbook candidate as a "purposive actor...the self-starter, the freebooting entrepreneur, the strategic politician...an autonomous individual."

These studies left little room for parties – and by extension party networks – to influence the candidacy decision. But recent scholarship has pushed back, demonstrating the importance of recruitment on the decision to run. Fox and Lawless (2010) analyze how gendered differences in candidate recruitment efforts affect candidate emergence. Sanbonmatsu (2006) finds that in states with more competition between the two parties, the parties in the legislature are more actively engaged in recruitment. Carnes (2018) forthcoming book focuses on the representational implications of the limited recruitment of working-class candidates. In all of these works, the role of party recruitment is key to the composition of potential candidates.

While few party networks still posses the authority to formally choose their nominee, many of the politically active groups observed during the 2014 primary campaign were still able to influence the field of candidates to benefit their preferred candidates. For example, in Louisiana one city council member who approached Lane Grigsby was informed that he "can't raise the money to be a serious candidate." He talked a district attorney from the state out of the race because "almost everything you've done in your past history, no matter how far back it goes, is going to come forth in a campaign." After conducting his own

opposition research, he also convinced a leader of a socially conservative interest group that running for Congress was not a good idea, because it would allow him to be "painted as the devil himself" (see McGaughy 2013). Grigsby was forthcoming about how this dissuasion aided Garret Graves, his preferred candidate:

> "Graves wouldn't have gotten into the race if [name redacted] had. He'd have been dominant enough to keep most of the good candidates out... So we said no, pull that banner down, and he pulled it down..."

Much of the scholarly work on candidate emergence has focused on candidate recruitment. Early work recognized the importance of candidate recruitment as "one of the more important functions performed by the party" as "recruiting candidates determines the personnel and, more symbolically, the groups to be represented among the decision-making elite" (Crotty 1968, p. 260). However, as the Louisiana example highlights, this influence often comes in the form of dissuasion. Grigsby convincend numerous candidates not to run. Jon Saidel was asked not to run by the Clintons. Mike Parrish was pushed out of the primary by the county activists who mobilized in support of Trivedi. In another 2014 contest, the United Food and Commercial Workers union worked hard to push Steve Gallardo out of Arizona's 7th district Democratic primary (Ocampo 2017). Acts of political dissuasion are rarely approached in the study of candidate emergence (see Niven 2006 as a notable exception), but serve as powerful resources for candidates in congressional primaries.

Critically, candidate recruitment and dissuasion are extremely difficult to observe – candidates, party operatives, and organized groups expend great efforts to keep the internal workings of recruitment and dissuasion out of the public eye. The recent controversy with Minority Whip Steny Hoyer discouraging a candidate in Colorado from competing in the primary shows just how valuable keeping these pressures hidden can be for the party (Fang 2018). In this chapter, I use a candidate's existing network density (END) scores to demonstrate that party networks are able to systematically influence the pool of candidates available for the voters to choose between. Specifically, I show that, all else equal, candidates with denser networks are *more* likely to drop out of a primary. Candidates with network

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support are more likely to be connected to the party, concerned about their reputation within the small world of local politics, and hopeful about future political opportunities. As a party insider summarized: "Why piss off a bunch of people you're going to need someday? That's the other thing, when you run against the 'anointed on' all you end up doing is pissing off people you might need someday, and you look like the hero when you announce you're not going to run"(quoted in Hassell 2016).

This finding may seem at odds with my central hypothesis that network support is a political advantage to individuals seeking their party's nomination. However, by revisiting cases from Arizona, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, we can see how what may appear as a "disadvantage" is actually a small price to pay for the maintenance of a profitable relationship between a group and it's would-be agent. While a network may choose to nominate another candidate, accepting rather than attacking that decision is often rewarded with help seeking other office or in future congressional runs.

5.2   Research Design

5.2.1   Data

Data for this analysis comes from the following sources. Individual level campaign contributions come from Bonica's (2015) *Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections* (DIME). This database consists of the over 130 million political contributions made by individuals and organizations to candidates and committees between 1979 and 2014. For each individual contribution, this data provides the amount, the date the contribution was reported, the recipient and the contributor, as well as many other characteristics of the recipients and donors, such as the office sought and the party identification of the candidate. It also designates whether a contribution was for the primary or general elections. Importantly, entity resolution techniques were used to create unique identifiers for both committees and individuals – a monumental undertaking, which allows the donation behavior of contributors to be bridged between election cycles. Previous work has focused solely on the behavior of

PACs because of the ease of tracking there behavior over time, but here I will be able to include the behavior of individual level donors, who constitute the vast majority of political donors.

House primary election results between 1982 and 2010 come from the Pettigrew, Owen, and Wanless (2014) database of House primary election results. For election years 2012 and 2014, the electoral and incumbency data came from the Federal Election Commission's archive of election results (FEC 2018). These data provide both the vote share received by each candidate in the race, but also whether or not that candidate was an incumbent seeking re-election.

Pettigrew et al. (2014) also provide each candidate's co-partisan presidential candidate in the previous election for elections between 1982 and 2010, while the presidential vote shares for 2012 and 2014 come from the DailyKos's Election data repository (DailyKos 2018). While some states do not report this data by congressional districts, the DailyKos maintains a detailed explanation of their imputation strategy. This is used to append similar data to the FEC elections data that is available in Pettigrew et al. (2014) for previous elections. This data, in combination with the incumbency data from the election returns, facilitates designating a primary contest as consequential (the underlying partisanship of the district creates a realistic possibility that the winner of the primary could win the general election) and/or open (there is no incumbent seeking reelection). As described in detail in Chapter 2, by focusing on consequential open-seat contests, this analysis avoids the complications of incumbency advantage while focusing on the path to Congress taken by most members.

For years 2004 through 2010, Pettigrew et al. (2014) also provide detailed histories of prior occupations for candidates, which allows us to determine which primary candidates had previously held office. Data for candidates in 2012 and 2014 were gathered by hand using internet searches of candidate biographies and news coverage of individual primary contests. Hans Hassell generously provided the elector history for the candidates that dropped out between 2004 and 2014 (see Hassell 2018). Together these data allow me to control for which candidates have held prior office, a binary frequently used to account for candidate quality or viability (see Jacobson 1989; 2009).

Bridging between individual contributions and primary election results is straightforward for candidates in 2012 and 2014   both Bonica and the FEC maintain unique FEC candidate identifiers. However, no such identifier exists between Pettigrew et al.'s primary election data and Bonicas campaign contribution data. In order to bridge these I generate my own identifiers in both data sources based on the the district, year, party, and name of each candidate (e.g., AL01-1980-D-SMITH). The vast majority of candidates could then be exactly matched between years. However, inconsistencies and typos in last names prevented 1,109 candidates from matching. From here I use a fuzzy matching technique that considers the total number of insertions, deletions, and substitutions required to transform one into a match in the other data[1]. I limit the tolerance to less than 10% of the total string, which for an identifier of average length is a change of 1 character. From here only 268 candidates were not matched. For these I found their FEC identifiers by hand from the raw FEC candidate files. The most common causes requiring hand matching were candidates with hyphenated last names and inversions of first names and last names. For example, candidate Daylin Leach is recorded in the FEC as Daylin, Leach and Bonnie Watson Coleman is recorded as Coleman, Bonnie Watson. 42 of 23,501 candidates are dropped due to missingness in the FEC records.

Once I have generated bridging identifiers between the two sources of data, I am able to merge the existing network density scores from campaign finance records with election outcomes. The method for calculating END scores is described in detail in the previous chapter, but I will summarize it again briefly. For each candidate in the FEC candidate master file, I find every contributor to their campaign. I then take this list of donors and find all of the donations they made in the *previous* election cycle. I restrict these donations to include only those made in federal non-presidential contests during the primary.[2] For example, I take all of Brendan Boyle's primary donors in 2014 and find all the donations

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[1]The minimum number of insertions, deletions, and substitutions to change one string to another is called it's Levenshtein edit distance. For example, RATTERSON has a Levenshtein edit distance of 1 to the name PATTERSON. As a tolerance of the total string, that is 1/9 characters, or 11%.

[2]The first year of availability for state campaign finance data varies, but rarely precedes 2000. Future work will attempt to extend this concept to include donor behavior at the sub-federal level.

they made in 2012. I then use this data to construct a network wherein donors are connected if they donated to the same candidate or campaign committee. I then calculate the density of this network to measure how connected this network of supporters is in the previous cycle. This measure of density is a candidate's END score.

Determining the dependent variable – which candidates dropped out of the primary – is not as straightforward as determining which candidate won the primary. Many candidates may publicly express interest in running for a seat, but never 'pull the trigger.' As a conservative and systematic estimate, I consider only candidates who filed paperwork with the FEC to run in a particular district in a given year. Each election cycle the FEC prepares a master candidate list which includes "one record for each candidate who has either registered with the [FEC] or appeared on a ballot list prepared by a state elections office" (FEC 2018). This list includes candidates running for the House, the Senate, and President, and includes candidates who are preemptively filing for future elections. First, I remove all non-House candidates. Second, I remove all House candidates who filed for a different election cycle. Finally, I compare this list to the list of candidates with recorded votes in the primary. I consider those candidates who filed, but did not compete, as to have dropped out of the primary.

5.2.2 Hypotheses

What effect should party network support have on a candidate's likelihood of dropping out? Hassell finds that House candidates with the same level of elected experience in districts competitive in the general election are less likely to withdraw from the primary contest as their share of national party donors increases (2018). In other words, candidates with greater support from donors who also gave to the national party fundraising committees were more likely to remain in the primary. Given that my central argument is that network support provides candidates with resources that benefit their pursuit of the nomination, it would not be unreasonable to assume that candidates with greater network support would be *less* likely to drop out of the primary. If so, then the average candidate who drops out should

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have the support of less dense networks than those candidates who remain in the contest.

But this is not the true quantity of interest. What is important is the influence of network support on candidates who are otherwise of similar quality in these largely non-competitive districts. If two candidates both have prior elected experience, both raised the similar amounts of money from similar numbers of donors, which candidate should be more likely to drop out? Would it be the candidate with the support of an organized group of supporters or the "freebooting political entrepreneur?" I argue that candidates with network support should be more likely to acquiesce in the face of party pressures to clear the field in pursuit of maintaining that relationship. Perhaps Jon Saidel was willing to go along with the party's preference in hopes of leveraging those relationships for a future mayoral bid (Otterbein 2015). Steve Gallardo's decision to dropout was less ambiguous – the unions explicitly offered to help him run (and eventually win) a seat on the county Board of Supervisors instead of Congress (Ocampo 2017). As Hassell (2016) notes, "candidates who aspire to elected office recognize that fighting against elite party preferences reduces future opportunities for elected office and positions of influence within the party network." In this situation, we would then expect that all else equal, candidates with greater network density to be *more* likely to drop out.

5.2.3   Model Specification

My analysis addresses the likelihood of dropping out of an consequential open-seat primary. A consequential open-seat primary is one in which there is no incumbent seeking the nomination (open-seat) and the presidential candidate of that party won at least 45% of the vote in the previous election where the winner of the primary has a competitive shot in the general election (consequential). Open-seat primaries eliminate the confounding influence of incumbency on the electoral outcomes. These races are also "where the action is," with over two-thirds of members of Congress entering by winning open-seat races (Gaddie and Bullock 2000; see Bawn et al. 2014). I focus on consequential open-seats, as these are the only races in which the winner of the primary has a realistic chance of success in the general election.

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However, the results presented hold when I consider all open-seat races and all consequential races.

I estimate a series of logistic regressions on the likelihood of dropping out of a primary election controlling for a range of potentially confounding variables. In different specifications, I include the log of a candidate's total primary fund-raising, a candidate's total number of unique and party donors, and whether the candidates had been previously elected to office. Candidate fundraising is one of the strongest predictors of candidate success in both primary and general elections for Congress (Jacobson 1980). And as Hassell (2015) argues, by "[u]sing fund-raising as a measure of candidate viability, we can assess whether connections to [the network] are largely determined by perceived candidate viability or whether party donors support candidates through different coordination mechanisms."

The support of a large dense network should be more valuable than the support of a small dense network, all else equal, as those groups with the resources and organization necessary to maintain larger groups are likely to be the same groups with access to more electoral resources. A union that has 100 members who consistently contribute to the same candidates is likely to have more boots on the ground and larger campaign coffers than a union with only 10 such members. With this consideration in mind, I also interact a candidate's END score with the number of their donors who also made a contribution in the previous cycle – or the size of their overall existing network.

Party donors are donors that also contributed both to the candidate and to one of the national party committees.[3] In order to make inferences about the preferences of the formal party organization, we need an alternative measures of the relationships between party elites and individual candidates, because the parties themselves rarely make endorsements in a primary (Hassell 2018). The number of shared donors between the national parties and the individual candidates is a straightforward measure of how connected these sets of actors are

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[3]The Republican National Committee, Democratic National Committee, National Republican Congressional Committee, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, National Republican Senatorial Committee, and the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee constitute the national party committees for this analysis. Hassell restricted his analysis to only the federal party committees responsible for the office in question. The results of my analysis hold in both cases.

in a particular election. I include this measure to control for the influence of the national party in primaries and to compare the magnitude of influence with previous studies (Hassell 2016; 2018).

The data for candidate quality and electoral experience is only available for House primary candidates between 2004 and 2014 and therefore model specifications controlling for candidate quality only consider campaigns during this time period. Candidate quality is a binary variable for whether a candidate has held previous office. While the data would allow us to make a more granular scale of quality given different levels of previous experience, more nuanced measures are often found to explain little additional variation (Jacobson and Kernell 1981). Gathering this data before 2004 is exceptionally difficult, given the same problems that plague the study of contemporary primary elections – limited news coverage and previous attention by scholars – but those efforts continue for future work.

5.3   Results

First, I present the relationship between existing network density and the likelihood of a candidate dropping out in Table 5.1. I provide the bi-variate relationship between existing network density and the likelihood of dropping out of a primary for all candidates in consequential open-seat contests between 1982 and 2014 (1 & 2), for Democrats (D) and Republicans (R) separately, and for candidates running in the 1980s (80), 1990s (90), and since 2000 (00). Across all specifications, there is a negative bi-variate relationship between a candidate's END score and the likelihood of them dropping out of the primary. In other words, donors supported by dense networks of support were, on average, less likely to drop out of the primary.

It is likely, however, that this relationship is spurious. The intrinsic viability of a particular candidacy likely holds significant influence over a candidates decision to drop out. Specifically, the bi-variate model considers the serious and vanity, "also-ran" candidates equally, where the decision to enter and remain in a race vary between these two groups of candidates (Canon 1990). The true quantity of interest is how changes in END scores affect

Table 5.1: Existing Network Density's Relationship with Primary Drop-out

				Primary Drop-out			
	(1)	(2)	(D)	(R)	(80)	(90)	(00)
END Score	−1.28***	−1.24***	−1.02***	−1.50***	−1.58***	−1.39***	−0.96***
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.19)	(0.18)	(0.28)	(0.20)	(0.22)
Intercept	−0.13**	−0.31*	−0.50*	−0.10	−0.11	−0.04	−0.23**
	(0.05)	(0.15)	(0.21)	(0.22)	(0.13)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Observations	5,474	5,474	2,985	2,489	942	2,060	2,472
Pseudo-R^2	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.08	0.05	0.02
Log Likelihood	−3,585.8	−3,567.1	−1,612.4	−1,932.6	−589.4	−1,353.0	−1,639.0
Akaike Inf. Crit.	7,175.5	7,170.1	3,260.8	3,901.2	1,182.8	2,710.0	3,281.9
Year Fixed Effects	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001
Standard errors clustered by primary contest.

otherwise equivalent candidacies. Table 5.2 then provides the estimates for a series of logistic regressions which control for the aforementioned measures of candidate viability. Again, I estimate these models for the sample of all candidates in consequential open-seat contests (1); just the Democratic (D) and Republican (R) candidates; those candidates running in the 1980s (80), 1990s (90), and 2000s (00); and finally those candidates running between 2004 and 2012 where prior office data is available for those candidates who dropped out (Q). The results from model (Q) are displayed visually in Figure 5.1.

As predicted, all else equal, candidates with the support of denser party networks are *more* likely to drop out of their primary. A END score increase of two standard deviations ($\approx$ 0.49), increases the likelihood of a candidate dropping out by about 10%, where candidates who held prior office are overall approximately 5% less likely to drop out than electoral novices. To put those rates in perspective, Figure 5.2 provides the distribution of candidates dropping out of consequential open-seat primaries by party over the time period analyzed. Over this period, approximately 18% of candidates who filed drop-out. Notably, this is slightly larger (18% vs. 11%) than what Hassell finds for all House primaries. This is likely a combination of open-seats attracting more candidates to begin with (Gaddie and Bullock 2000) and the inclusion of incumbents who are rarely 'primaried.' (Boatright 2013). However, these base rates show that the influence of party networks is not just statistically significant, but carries a substantively important impact.

The influence of candidate viability – here measured by primary fundraising – is very important for mediating the effect of network support on the likelihood of primary dropouts. The bi-variate models estimated in Table 5.1 are re-estimated for candidates who raised at least \$10,000 (+) and less than \$10,000 dollars (–) in their primary campaign. Among non-viable candidates, party support has no discernible effect, but the relationship is negative. It is these low-quality candidates that are driving the spurious relationships in Table 5.1. Even in the bi-variate case, those candidates meeting this threshold of viability become more likely to drop out as their network of contributors become increasingly organized.

Table 5.2: Existing Network Density's Effect on Primary Drop-out

	Primary Drop-out						
	(1)	(D)	(R)	(80)	(90)	(00)	(Q)
END Score	1.974***	2.043***	1.963***	1.226**	2.914***	2.497***	2.574***
	(0.177)	(0.263)	(0.249)	(0.400)	(0.341)	(0.323)	(0.409)
Donors$_{t0}$	0.001	0.001	−0.002	0.007	0.001	0.001	0.0001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.0005)	(0.001)
Log Funds	−0.300***	−0.307***	−0.300***	−0.301***	−0.426***	−0.271***	−0.224***
	(0.010)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.030)	(0.022)	(0.013)	(0.015)
Party Donors	−0.001*	−0.002*	0.007**	0.026**	0.015**	−0.0004	0.00003
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.009)	(0.005)	(0.0005)	(0.001)
Prior Office							−1.101***
							(0.190)
END*Donors$_{t0}$	0.008***	0.005*	0.010***	−0.009	0.010*	0.004***	0.005**
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.010)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Intercept	0.239	0.320	0.210	0.482*	1.050***	0.725***	0.880***
	(0.170)	(0.240)	(0.243)	(0.203)	(0.277)	(0.174)	(0.217)
Observations	5,474	2,489	2,985	942	2,060	2,472	1,487
Pseudo-R^2	0.345	0.348	0.362	0.324	0.467	0.320	0.321
Log Likelihood	−2,861.7	−1,304.6	−1,525.9	−489.4	−953.3	−1,322.0	−787.0
Akaike Inf. Crit.	5,767.4	2,653.2	3,095.8	996.8	1,926.7	2,670.0	1,595.9
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

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Figure 5.1: Predicted Probabilities of Candidate Drop-out by Candidate Quality
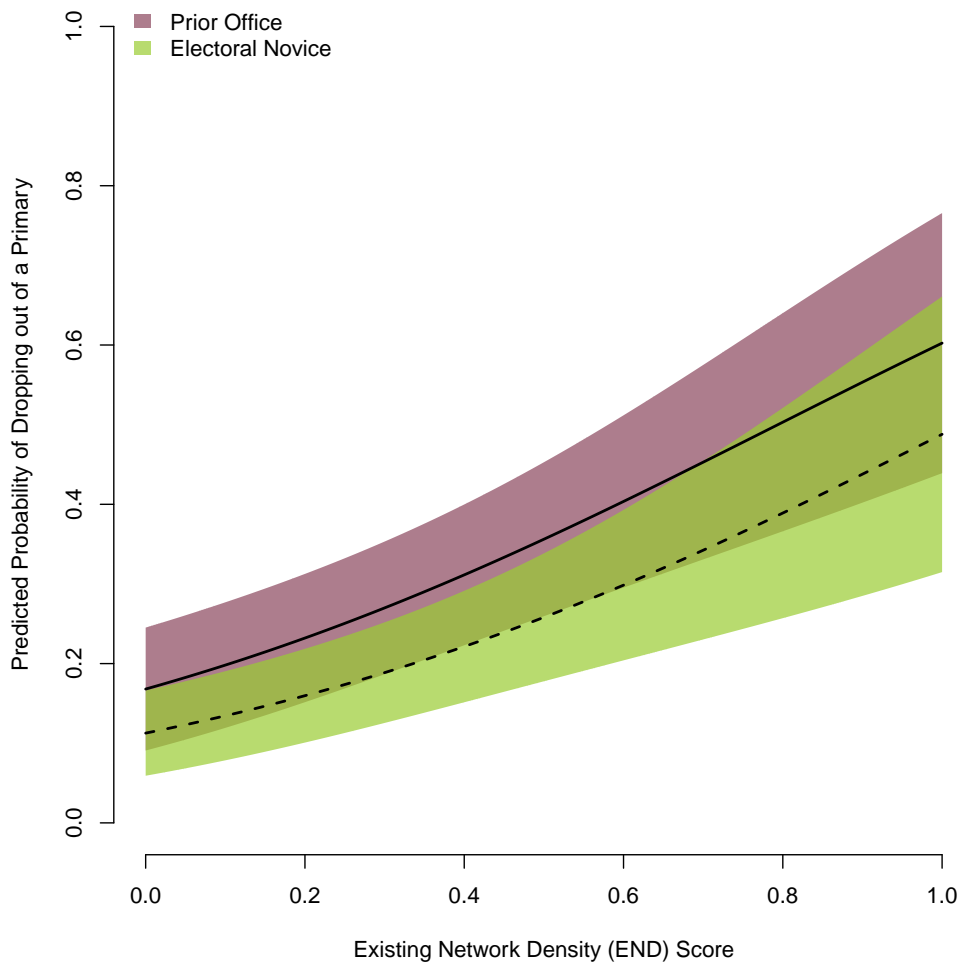
Figure 5.2: Candidate Drop-out Over Time by Party
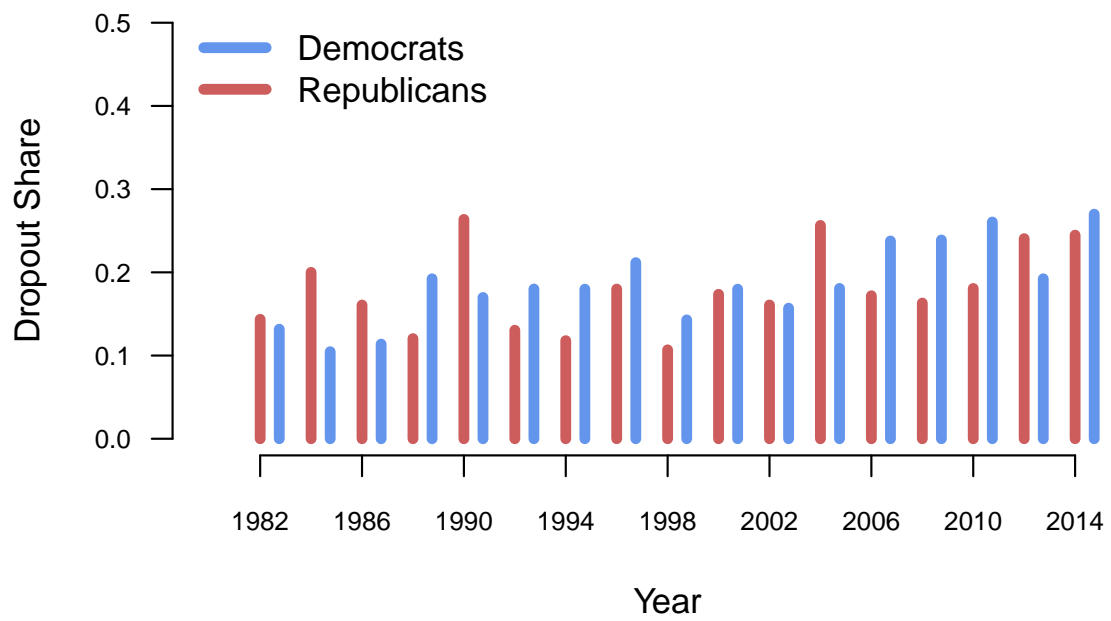
Table 5.3: Primary Drop-out by Fundraising Levels

	Primary Drop-out	
	(−)	(+)
END Score	−0.26	3.09***
	(0.19)	(0.25)
Intercept	0.02	−3.95***
	(0.18)	(0.31)
Observations	2,503	2,971
Pseudo-R^2	0.03	0.13
Log Likelihood	−1,651.232	−1,400.373
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,338.464	2,836.746
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001
Standard errors clustered by primary contest.

5.4   Discussion

In this chapter I sought to demonstrate the systematic influence of party network support on the field of candidates in consequential open-seat primaries for Congress. To do so, I estimate the impact of an original measure of group or network support – existing network density (END) scores – on the likelihood of individuals dropping out of the primary. I find that, all else equal, candidates with the support of party networks are more likely to drop out of primaries. Across time, party, and numerous model specifications, the effect remained both substantively and statistically significant. A two-standard deviation increase in existing network density makes a candidate approximately 10% more likely to drop out of the primary. In sum, candidates with the support of networks affiliated with groups within the larger extended party network were more likely to succumb to party pressures to clear the field.

At risk of spoiling the surprise from Chapter 6 – How can we observe some variable make a candidate both more likely to drop out, but also more likely to win their primary? The best analogy may come from a slightly harder science. Exposure to antibiotics causes

many bacteria to die, but those who survive are much more likely to thrive. If we look at the dosing stage, we would see antibiotics reductions to the population, but if we look at later stages of the bacteria's life, we would observe better outcomes for the bacteria who had been exposed to the bacteria. In the case of network pressures, during the invisible primary they attempt to thin the pool of candidates in support of their preferred nominee, but in the primary stage they turn their resources toward supporting that candidate. Importantly, the only candidates exposed to the "treatment" are those viable candidates who are supported by a network of supporters within the larger party network.

Again, the finding that greater END scores is associated with an increased likelihood of dropping out of the primary may seem at odds with my central hypothesis that network support is a political advantage to individuals seeking their party's nomination. But consider the future prospects of candidates who dropped out: Vincent Gregory was able to win a competitive state senate primary in Michigan after dropping out of the 14th district primary; Mike Parrish won the nomination without opposition in the 6th district the following cycle; Jon Saidel from Pennsylvania's 13th district had early union support in his mayoralty bid (although he dropped out of this contest too). This pattern could be seen in other races from 2014 as well. John Moorlach was nominated to replace Mimi Walters in the California state senate after she won an open-seat race in the 45th district. Ocampo (2017) provides the details of how the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union in Arizona convinced Steve Gallardo to drop out of the primary and in stead run for county supervisor.

There are exceptions. Val Arkoosh, who likely spoiled Margolies chances of winning the nomination by dividing the Montgomery County vote and keeping EMILY's List out of the race, was rewarded with a plumb appointment to the Montgomery County Committee. Andrew Zwicker, who was less influential on the eventual nominee from New Jersey's 12th district, was given the county line for a state assembly seat in the next cycle. Most notably, Paul Mitchell won the nomination in the neighboring 10th district the next cycle with Moolenaar's endorsement, despite not only challenging Moolenaar the previous cycle, but running a generally negative campaign.

While there is a surplus of high quality, talented, and ambitious candidates, that pool

is not infinite, a consideration to which party networks are obviously not immune. The campaigns themselves can serve as opportunities for ambitious candidates to demonstrate themselves as champions. Zwicker, a physicist himself, ran a positive campaign and molded himself after the former popular Congressman and rocket scientist Rush Holt. This endeared him to the network of progressive activists, primarily faculty and staff of Princeton University, who helped him secure the nomination and eventually win an Assembly seat for a traditionally Republican seat. Marcel Groen, the Montgomery County Democratic Chairman at the time, noted how talented Arkoosh was on the campaign trail and how he hoped to find some office for her in the future as a good face for the party. Arkoosh herself noted that the support she had in her commissioner races came from the positive campaign she ran in 2014. These races provided opportunities for previously unknown candidates to demonstrate themselves as potentially effective champions for groups within the party network. In these instances, it may be worth the risk to buck the party.

The Mitchell example, is more concerning. Mitchell ran an extremely negative air war against Moolenaar, claiming he raised taxes, supported Obamacare, and other damning indictments for a Republican primary. Why then would "Team Midland" endorse his campaign in the neighboring district? Perhaps it's better to have a self-funding millionaire opponent in office in another district? Perhaps they were simply bandwagoning behind the eventual nominee. Unfortunately, our sources provided little insight into this question.

In combination with the Granger causality tests from the previous chapter, this finding also provides some defense against reverse causality. If party networks were simply falling behind the inevitable candidate, then we should see no effect of network support on the likelihood of dropping out, or at the very least, the effect should be that support is associated with *not* dropping out of the primary. Also, the very presence of field shaping efforts on the part of these networks is evidence against bandwagoning. There would be no need to recruit candidates into the primary or push others out if the motivation behind such efforts was just to win the primary. These efforts show that networks are concerned with nominating candidates supportive of their agendas and candidates who will be competitive in the general election – the value of which they find worth the costs and criticisms of party meddling (see

Diaz 2018). Together, these data present a strong case for the influence of party networks in shaping the fields of congressional primaries.

The data available for studying candidate withdrawal does qualify the conclusions of this analysis. In a sense, these are conservative estimates of party influence over the field of candidates – it only includes the systematic influence of network support on candidates withdrawing from a race after they have filed to compete. It does not include those candidates who never filed to run because they were preemptively responding to those party pressures or the difficulties in mounting a campaign against the supported candidates. For example, State Senator Burt Johnson, who had filed to run in Michigan's 13th district when it appeared that Rep. John Conyers would either retire or run in the newly drawn 14th district. When Conyers changed course and ran for re-election in the 13th district, Burt Johnson began exploring a run for the 14th district instead. However, the change in paperwork never occurred, and he never formally entered the race. Someone familiar with Johnson's campaign cited the inability to raise campaign funds in the face of unified union support of Hobbs as a central reason he remained out of the race.

This approach also misses the handful of candidates who reacted quickly to party pressures. Jon Saidel had filed to run in Pennsylvania's 13th district, but suspended his campaign and endorsed Margolies before he raised any money (resulting in an END score of 0). Considering he was able to raise close to a million dollars as he considered running for mayor in 2007 (City of Philadelphia 2018; see Dunn 2015), it is unlikely that an inability to raise funds pushed him to reconsider his campaign. Insiders speculated that his "heart wasn't in it" and that he wanted to "keep the powder dry" for another shot at the mayorship in 2015 (Otterbein 2015). Similarly, it is unlikely that State Rep. Mark Cohen, one of the longest serving state legislator in the country at the time, was deterred by an inability to raise the money necessary. In his 2012 re-election campaign, he was able to raise nearly $100,000 for an uncontested general election. While we know from insider accounts that Saidel's decision was influenced by party pressures, we only know that insiders speculated a similar calculus for Cohen. But as a general limitation to this method, this approach would view both Cohen and Saidel as candidate's without connections to the party network, when the opposite is

likely the case. In this sense, we are underestimating the influence of party networks on field shaping efforts.

CHAPTER 6

Winning the Nomination

6.1 The Influence of Political Networks in Primary Elections

The nomination of candidates for office is at the heart of party behavior. In determining whether an organization is a political party, the first criteria considered by the Federal Elections Commission is whether it is engaged in "nominating qualified candidates for President and various Congressional offices in numerous states" (FEC 2018). The key purpose of a party, according to many scholars, is the nomination of candidates for office (Key 1958; Schattschneider 1942).

Despite the central role of nominations play in their definition, parties are often viewed as having little control over the process. Jacobson describes candidates in primary elections as "freebooting political entrepreneurs," whose success and failures are based on the their own strengths and weaknesses (2009). Herrnson (2011, p. 41) similarly argues that

> "most successful candidates are self-starters because the electoral system lacks a tightly controlled party-recruitment process...Because the system is candidate-centered, the desire, skills, and resources that candidates bring to the table in the electoral arena are the most important criteria separating serious candidates from those who have little chance of getting elected."

However, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3, the constellation of actors that constitute the modern party still hold influence over the selection of candidates – these supposedly "freebooting entrepreneurs do not fight with bare knuckles" (Bawn et al. 2012). The support of groups within the party network provides powerful campaign resources to their chosen candidates. Support from these networks provided candidates with campaign staff and advisers,

canvassers and get-out-the-vote resources, independent expenditure campaigns, field-clearing efforts, fund-raising assistance, and numerous other benefits often beyond the reach of candidates without group support. In numerous studies, these resources have individually been found to aid candidates in their pursuit of nomination (Desmarais et al. 2015; Hassell 2016; 2018; Ocampo 2017). Moreover, in an environment lacking party cues, media coverage, and public engagement, group endorsements are themselves a signal to voters in these low information elections (Arceneaux and Kolodney 2009; Dominguez 2011).

These groups were not simply falling behind the winning nominee, but were actively pushing candidates who had histories advocating for their policies and positions. Where previous studies posited an incentive to coordinate behind a nominee mutually agreeable to the various factions within a party, what was observed on the ground more closely resembled a free-for-all among the relevant stakeholders. Labor unions, EMILY's List, and minority groups would marshal support behind their chosen candidates in Democratic primaries, and business interests, Tea Party organizations, and evangelical activists would similarly compete on the Republican side. Those competing did so knowing that the stakes were relatively low – any co-partisan nominee would be generally supportive of the party's platform – but the potential pay-offs – a nominee who was a champion for their particular issue – were tremendously valuable.

Systematically observing the benefits of group support, however, is difficult. As Hassell (2016) notes, most of these studies have either focused solely on presidential nominations (Cohen et al. 2008), been forced to rely on a small number of cases (Dominguez 2011; Masket 2009; Ocampo 2017), or only considered general elections (Desmarais et al. 2015; Hannagan et al. 2010; Gerber and Green 2000) because of the intractability of gathering the data systematically for a representative sample of primaries. Exacerbating these limitations, the informal, behind-the-scenes politicking of party elites is often purposefully kept out of the public eye (Bawn et al. 2014). In discussing the difficulties in measuring the impact of party efforts on primary outcomes, Dominguez (2011) admits the need for "other proxies" as other measures of party influence are "cumbersome to gather for large numbers of candidates."

In the previous chapter I demonstrated how political networks are able to systematically

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shape the pool of potential candidates competing for the nomination. In this chapter, I use the existing network density of a candidate's campaign contribution network to show that these party networks are still able to help nominate their preferred candidate.

6.2   Research Design

6.2.1   Data

Data for this analysis comes from the same sources as Chapter 5. Individual level campaign contributions come from Bonica's (2015) *Database on Ideology, Money in Politices, and Elections* (DIME). House primary election results between 1982 and 2014 come from Pettigrew, Owen, and Wanless (2014) database of House primary election results the Federal Election Commission's archive of election results (FEC 2018). Pettigrew et al. (2014) also provide each candidate's co-partisan presidential candidate in the previous election for elections between 1982 and 2010, while the presidential vote shares for 2012 and 2014 come from the DailyKos's Election data repository (DailyKos 2018). For years 2000 through 2010, Pettigrew et al. (2014) also provide detailed histories of prior occupations for candidates, which allows us to determine which primary candidates had previously held office. I personally gathered the data for candidates in 2012 and 2014 using web archives of local newspapers and a variety of other primary sources. The variable of interest in this chapter will again be a candidate's existing network density (END) score. For a more detailed explanation for the data sources and methods, see §5.2.1.

6.2.2   Hypotheses

The central hypothesis of this analysis is that candidates with a greater END score should be more likely to win consequential open-seat primaries. These effects should remain after controlling for measures of electoral viability, such as campaign fundraising and candidate quality. Additionally, because a large dense network should signal a greater value to a candidate than a small dense network, the interaction between the number of donors and

the candidates END should also be positive.

Secondary hypotheses can also be investigated given the breadth of data available with this approach. First, the underlying mechanism of organized group support is partisan insofar as it involves the behavior of party networks, but doesn't theorize a difference between Democratic and Republican candidates. Second, in contrast to the parties in decline literature, the tools available to actors within the extended party network exists equally across time, and so the effect of network density should be stable across time.

6.2.3 Model Specification

My analysis addresses the likelihood of winning an consequential open-seat primary. A consequential open-seat primary is one in which there is no incumbent seeking the nomination (open-seat) and the presidential candidate of that party won at least 45% of the vote in the previous election (consequential). Open-seat primaries eliminate the confounding influence of incumbency on the electoral outcomes. These races are also "where the action is," with over two-thirds of members of Congress entering by winning open-seat races (Gaddie and Bullock 2000; see Bawn et al. 2014). I focus on consequential open-seats, as these are the only races in which the winner of the primary has a realistic chance of success in the general election.[1]

I estimate a series of logistic regressions considering the likelihood of winning a primary election controlling for a range of potentially confounding variables. In different specifications, I include measures of a candidate's primary fund-raising, a candidate's total number of unique and national party donors, and whether the candidates have previously held office. Candidate fundraising is one of the strongest predictors of candidate success in both primary and general elections for Congress (Jacobson 1980). And as Hassell (2016) argues, by "[u]sing fund-raising as a measure of candidate viability, we can assess whether connections to [the network] are largely determined by perceived candidate viability or whether party

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[1]The results of the analyses presented below hold for the full sets of all open seats and all consequential primaries, but are subject to greater concerns of endogeneity.

donors support candidates through different coordination mechanisms." Because a larger dense network is obviously a greater resource than a smaller dense network, I also interact the number of primary donors with the END score.

As further verification, I also estimate a series of ordinary least squares models with a dependent variable of a candidate's vote share in the primary. These models are only presented as further evidence of the underlying trends from the logistic models. The compositional nature of candidate vote share data, however, makes direct interpretations of these findings more limited.

Party donors are donors that also contributed both to the candidate and to one of the national party committees.[2] In order to make inferences about the preferences of the formal party organization, we need an alternative measures of the relationships between party elites and individual candidates, because the parties themselves rarely make endorsements in a primary (Hassell 2018). The number of shared donors between the national parties and the individual candidates is a straightforward measure of how connected these sets of actors are in a particular election. I include this measure to control for the influence of the national party in primaries and to compare the magnitude of influence with previous studies (Hassell 2016; 2018).

The data for candidate quality and electoral experience is only available for House primary candidates between 2000 and 2014 and therefore model specifications controlling for candidate quality only consider this time period. Candidate quality is a binary variable for whether a candidate has held previous office. While the data would allow us to make a more granular scale of quality given different levels of previous experience, more nuanced measures are often found to explain little additional variation (Jacobson and Kernell 1981). Gathering this data before 2000 is exceptionally difficult, given the same problems that plague the study of contemporary primary elections – limited news coverage and previous

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[2]The Republican National Committee, Democratic National Committee, National Republican Congressional Committee, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, National Republican Senatorial Committee, and the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee constitute the national party committees for this analysis. Hassell restricted his analysis to only the federal party committees responsible for the office in question. The results of my analysis hold in both cases.

attention by scholars.

6.3   Networks on the Ground Revisited

Before investigating the systematic influence of existing network density on electoral outcomes, how do END scores perform as a measure for understanding the case studies from 2014? Table 6.1 provides the END score and the number of donors in their existing network for the winners and runners-up of the 11 case studies from Chapter 4. In 7 of the 11 contests, the candidate with the densest network won the primary. In three contests, the top two candidates had the support of roughly equal networks, but the winner's network was many at least 50% larger. Only in Michigan's 14th district did the eventual nominee win with the support of a noticeably more sparse network.

While few political science theories hope to account for every case, this exception should be explored further. The Michigan district provides the clear limitation to this approach. While Lawrence barely bested Hobbs on primary day, his network was both larger and more structure as measured by the number of contributors and its END score. More than a mere anomaly, it points to a possible weakness in this approach. Primaries for Congress are often a candidate's first attempt for federal office. If a candidate had the support of a solely local network – perhaps, like Lawrence, a network of women mayors and their local campaign supporters – who rarely participate in federal elections, then measuring their networks based solely on federal contribution records could miss an underlying durable organization. Ideally this measure would include the contribution behavior beyond federal offices, but this data is only available for a large sample of states in more recent years.

Returning again to the example of Pennsylvania's 13th district, we can see how network density played out in detail for one race. One of the more anomalous aspects of this race was the inverse relationship between fundraising and electoral outcomes. The trend could not even be considered inconclusive – the vote share of the individual candidates was the opposite of their fundraising prowess. Figure 6.1 provides the relationship between END scores and vote share in comparison to the relationship between fundraising and vote share.

Table 6.1: END Scores for Case Study Winners and Runners-Up

District	Winner	END score	Donors$_{t0}$	Runner-up	END score	Donors$_{t0}$	H1
UT-04	Love	0.404	1,117	Fuehr	0.000	0	✓
VA-10	Comstock	0.348	366	Marshall	0.221	20	✓
NJ-12	Coleman	0.291	202	Greenstein	0.329	126	≈
CO-04	Buck	0.380	272	Renfroe	0.400	10	≈
MI-04	Moolenaar	0.331	243	Mitchell	0.000	3	✓
NC-12	Adams	0.275	161	Graham	0.182	53	✓
MI-14	Lawrence	0.222	206	Hobbs	0.417	246	X
NC-07	Rouzer	0.332	412	White	0.245	109	✓
PA-13	Boyle	0.418	198	Margolies	0.29	428	✓
LA-06	Graves	0.286	306	Dietzel	0.303	99	≈
PA-06	Trivedi	0.601	157	Parrish*	0.173	22	✓

*Parrish dropped out of the primary and Trivedi ran unopposed.

Figure 6.1: Network Density and Campaign Finance in Pennsylvania's 13th District
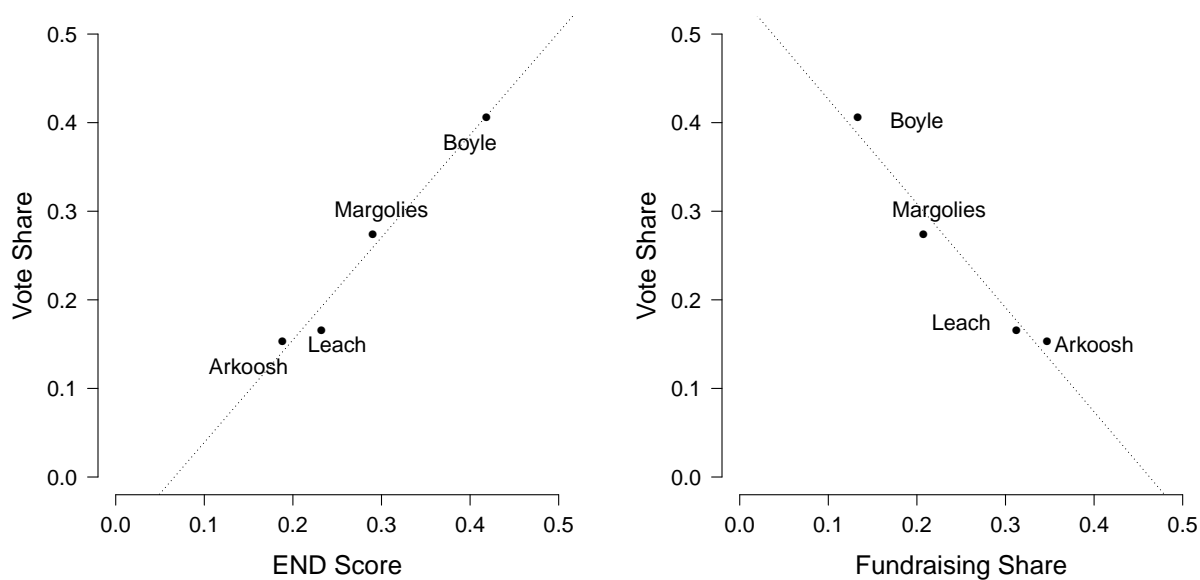
While Arkoosh was able to raise a significant amount of money for her campaign, 49% of those funds came from outside of Pennsylvania the vast majority of which came from fellow doctors, particularly anesthesiologists. The medical community was able to help her raise money but was more reactive to her candidacy than a central player in creating it. In other words, the medical community is more than willing to help one of their own in a primary, but is not actively recruiting doctors nor necessarily contributing in primaries without doctors. This hands-off style of participation means that on a cycle to cycle basis Arkoosh's network likely works together less regularly, resulting in a less dense network of support. The sporadic nature of the medical communities support means that they have fewer resources that active or full-time networks possess. For example, the union's that supported Boyle are consistently active cycle after cycle and have a full-time political operation with large numbers of boots on the ground to help their candidates.

Similarly, while Leach was able to raise a good deal of money from online progressive organizations like the PCCC and MoveOn.org, these endorsements were not connected to the local political community and came with few campaign volunteers or canvassers. These groups also did not engage in any large scale advertising or GOTV efforts on his behalf. And Margolies, while widely panned for running an absent-minded campaign, was obviously well connected to the Clinton fundraising network, and had the behind the scenes assistance of both the Philadelphia and Montgomery County Democratic parties. While these efforts were not visible to anyone but the most politically connected, they were still powerful forces shaping the field to benefit Margolies.

Boyle, in comparison, benefited from the unequivocal and dedicated support of organized labor. Endorsements, campaign donations, mailers, independent expenditures, campaign advisers, canvassers, phone-bank operators, election day door-knockers – all of this and more were marshaled by the Philadelphia unions in support of Boyle's campaign. Five months prior to the primary, Brendan Boyle had already secured over 20 endorsements from major trade unions in the district, and was endorsed by the state legislators most closely affiliated with the labor movement (Boyle for Congress 2014). Building a Better Pennsylvania, a political action committee affiliated with the trade unions of Philadelphia,

spent over \$350,000 on independent expenditures on behalf of his campaign (Brennan 2014). One individual affiliated with the unions reported to me that they had 50 people either knocking on doors, passing out fliers, or making phone calls every day the month leading up to the primary. In addition to these visible efforts, elites interviewed in the lead up to the primary believed that pressure from party actors kept other candidates from entering the race, securing Boyle a geographic monopoly in Philadelphia (Gibson 2013). Given how active unions are in Democratic primaries, we would expect that those supporters who donated to Boyle due to his union support have a durable history of supporting the same labor-backed candidates.

Figure 6.2 displays a sample of Boyle's and Arkoosh's network to visualize the differences in density. One common pathology of large network visualizations is the "hairball" problem – the number of actors in the network crowd the figure to the point where it appears as an unintelligible hairball. When I plot all of the contributors for any candidate, it becomes difficult to see any clear relationship. Therefore, I only display those donors who made at least 3 contributions in the previous election cycle. While reducing the graph to this subset leaves both candidates with more active donors, the density ratio between the full pool and the sub-sample is approximately the same.[3]

Fitting the qualitative impressions this race, the most central actor in Arkoosh's network is the American Medical Association, whereas the most central donor in Boyle's network is the Boilermakers and Blacksmiths PAC (the IBEW was among the 10 most central donors). These sub-graphs display two noteworthy trends. First, while Arkoosh raised more money from more individuals in the primary, more of Boyle's primary donors (61%) gave to multiple campaigns in the previous cycle than Arkoosh's (36%). Not only did a larger share of Boyle's supporters contribute in the previous cycle, they worked together more consistently. Boyle's supporters are more likely to be connected to one another – to have contributed to the same campaign as one another – than Arkoosh's donors, as is demonstrated by the denser

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[3]Boyle's END score is $\approx .41$ in the full sample, and $\approx .43$ in the sub-sample. Arkoosh's END score is $\approx .19$ in the full sample, and $\approx .13$ in the sub-sample. In both situations, Boyle's network is more than twice as dense.

Figure 6.2: Network Density for Boyle and Arkoosh
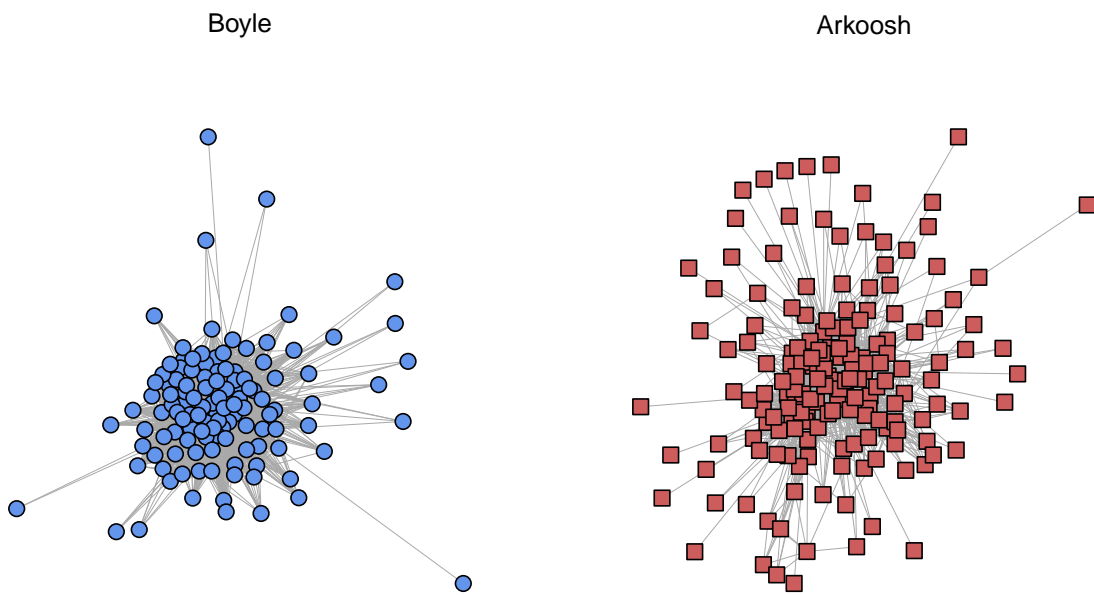
Boyle

Arkoosh

Note: These graphs display the networks of Brendan Boyle's (blue circles) and Val Arkoosh's donors (red squares) from the 2012 election cycle. For visualization, donors are only tied if they contributed to 2 of the same candidates in the previous primary cycle.

clustering and more numerous ties between actors in his network. The radial structure of Arkoosh's network shows a lack of connections between many members of her network. In comparison to Arkoosh's supporters, Boyle's supporters work together more consistently in their party's primary.

The results from one race are insufficient to conclude that dense networks of support help determine the outcomes of congressional primaries. This is especially true given how instrumental these cases were in the development of the underlying theory. While anecdotally illustrative, these examples also fail to sufficiently address concerns of endogeneity. In the following sections I will show that the support of the extended party network significantly and substantively affects the electoral prospects of candidates in pursuit of nomination, and that this support is driving this relationship.

6.4 Network Density and Primary Outcomes

The main results of the logistic regressions are presented in Table 6.2.[4] In the first specification, (1), I provide the simply bi-variate relationship between existing network density and the likelihood of winning a consequential open-seat primary. The sizable, positive, and statistically significant coefficient provides initial evidence in support of the central hypothesis. In the second specification, (2), I include controls for the logged value of total fundraising in the primary and the total number of donors who also contributed to the national party, but the results remain consistent. Not surprisingly, increased fundraising performance was also associated with increased likelihood of primary victory. Fitting with Hassell's (2018) findings, larger numbers of national party donors also increases the likelihood of winning. But larger dense networks should be more valuable than small dense networks, so in the third model, (3), I interact the density of the network with the number of individuals in that network. As anticipated, this interaction is positive and significant. While one may be concerned by the decrease in the magnitude of the END score coefficient, if we consider that

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[4]As part of the philosophy that the data used to form a hypothesis shouldn't be used to test that hypothesis, it should be noted that while the cases from 2014 are included in these models, all of the findings are consistent if only years 1982 – 2012 are used.

the average number of donors in an existing network is approximately 70, that provides an estimated coefficient of 3.82.[5] Even after controlling for prior office, (4), the effect remains robust. As noted prior, the data on electoral history is only available after 2000, and so the sample in this model is reduced by two-thirds and only considers this time frame.

Figure 6.3 provides the results of model (3) graphically. The predicted probabilities of primary victory where covariates are held at their means and medians are plotted with solid and dotted lines, respectively. While convention is to hold covariates at their means, I also present the model with covariates held at their medians on account of right-skew in the distribution of donor counts. The shading around the line signifies the 95% confidence intervals around those estimates. A two standard deviation increase in network density, moving from 0 to ≈ 0.5, increases the likelihood of winning a primary by approximately 15 percentage points for the median candidate, and nearly 50 percentage points for the average candidate. This model also correctly classifies candidates as either winners or losers 2,978 out of 3,742 times, or in 80% of all cases. Figure 6.4 provides the results of model (4) graphically. The predicted probabilities of primary victory where covariates are held at their medians are presented and where candidate's vary as to whether or not they have held prior office. Even with the reduced sample size, the effect remains similar to effects from model (3). While omitted for brevity, these results also hold if modeled on experienced and novice candidates separately. The additional information of prior office explains little additional variation in outcomes: of the 1,119 cases, this model correctly classifies 922, or 82%.

Figure 6.5 provides the receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve for full specification of the model presented in Table 6.2. A ROC curve is a graphical illustration of the ability of a binary classifier, such as a logistic regression model, to correctly classify outcomes as its discrimination threshold is varied. The plot is created by plotting the true positive rate against the false positive rate at various thresholds (Swets 1996). A perfect predictor would be a perpendicular curve. The area under the curve (AUC) is the probability that the classifier will rank a randomly chosen affirmative instance higher than a randomly chosen

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[5]$1.420 + 0.034*70.55 \approx 3.819$.

Table 6.2: Existing Network Density's Effect on Likelihood of Winning a Primary

| | Primary Win | | | |
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
END Score	3.425***	2.194***	1.420***	1.350*
	(0.178)	(0.176)	(0.211)	(0.545)
$Donors_{t0}$			−0.006*	−0.006*
			(0.002)	(0.003)
Log Funds		0.194***	0.161***	0.192*
		(0.036)	(0.030)	(0.083)
Party Donors		0.012**	0.001	0.004
		(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.007)
Prior Office				0.464**
				(0.170)
END*$Donors_{t0}$			0.034***	0.028**
			(0.005)	(0.009)
Intercept	−1.948***	−3.339***	−2.915***	−3.972***
	(0.061)	(0.384)	(0.286)	(0.853)
Observations	3,755	3,742	3,742	1,119
Psuedo-R^2	0.194	0.342	0.384	0.427
Log Likelihood	−2,017.869	−1,770.451	−1,695.830	−472.992
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,039.738	3,580.903	3,435.659	969.983
Year Fixed Effects	X	✓	✓	✓

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001
Standard errors clustered by primary contest.

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Figure 6.3: Network Density and Likelihood of Winning Primary
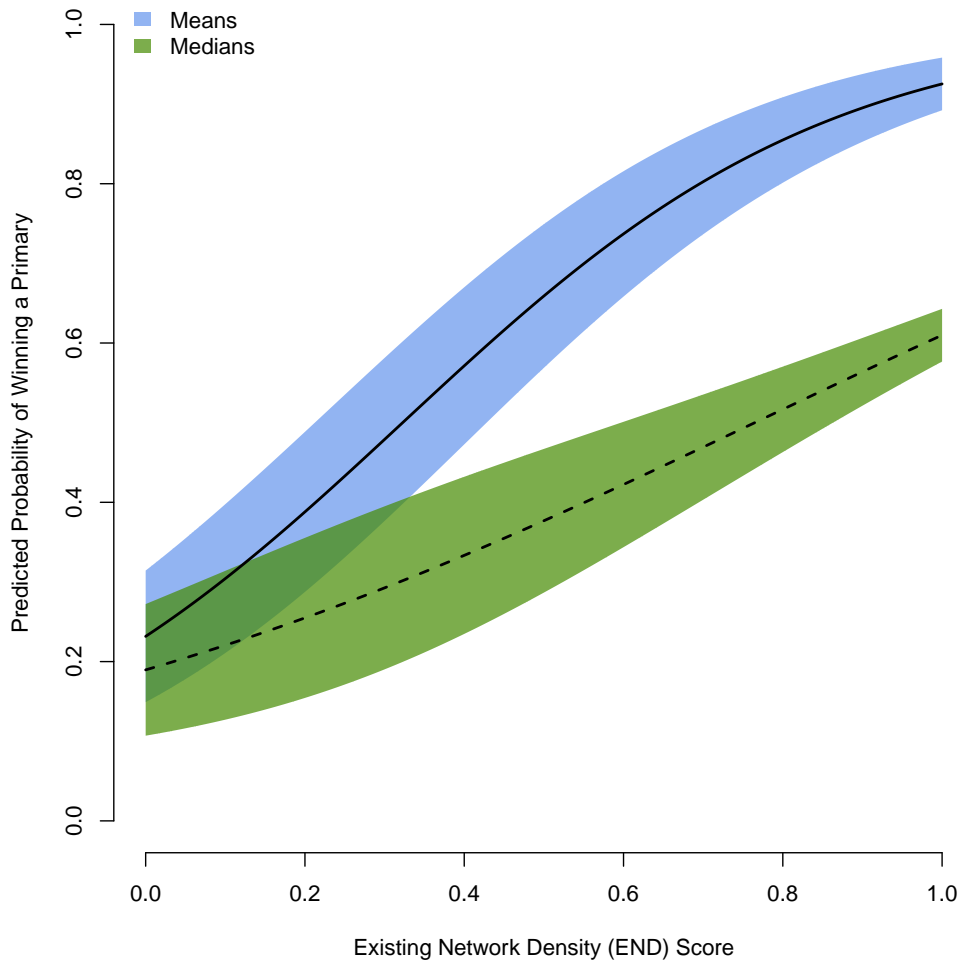
Figure 6.4: Network Density and Likelihood of Winning Primary by Candidate Quality
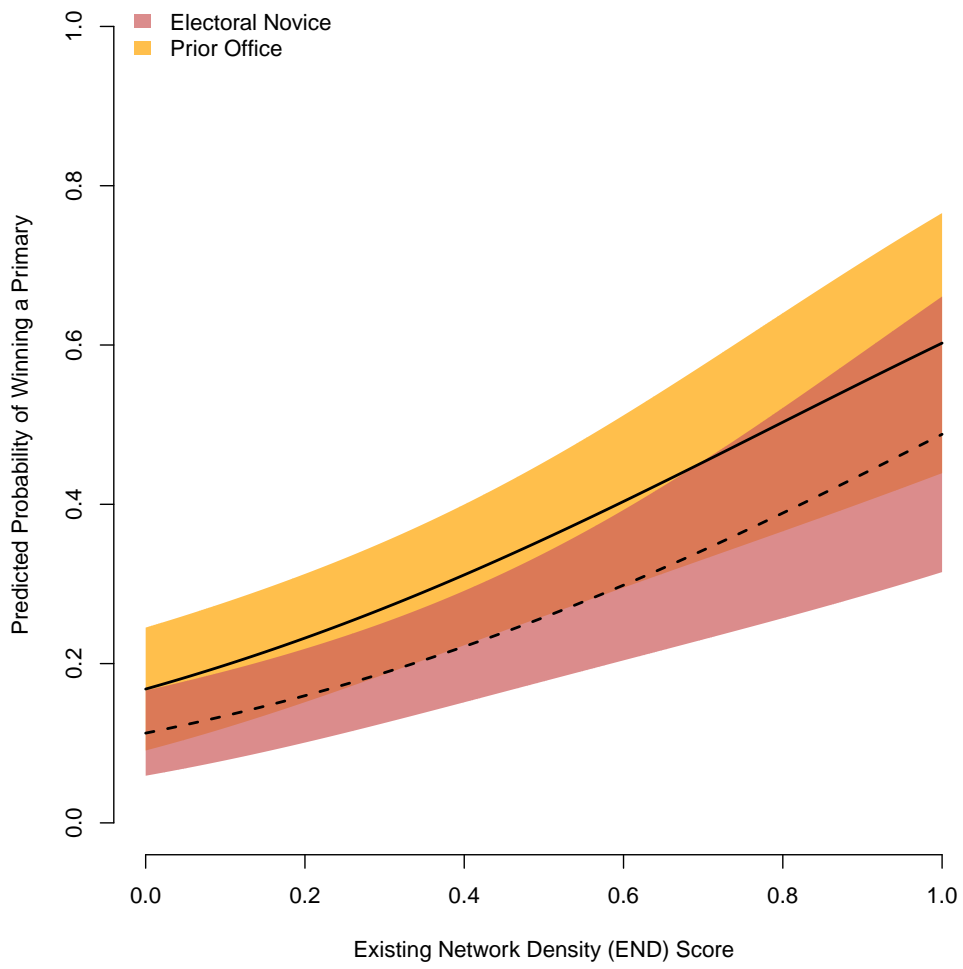
negative one. In the context of this project, it is the probability that the model will correctly rank a winning candidate as more likely to win their primary than a candidate who lost their contest. While there is no conventional rule of thumb, models with AUC's greater than .85 are generally considered reliable predictors in the social sciences (Ekelund 2012). The symmetric nature of the curve in Figure 6.5 also suggests that the model is not biased toward Type-I or Type-II errors. In sum, the models from Table 6.2 are reliable predictors of candidate victory in congressional primaries.

Figure 6.5: ROC Diagnostics for Model 6.2.4
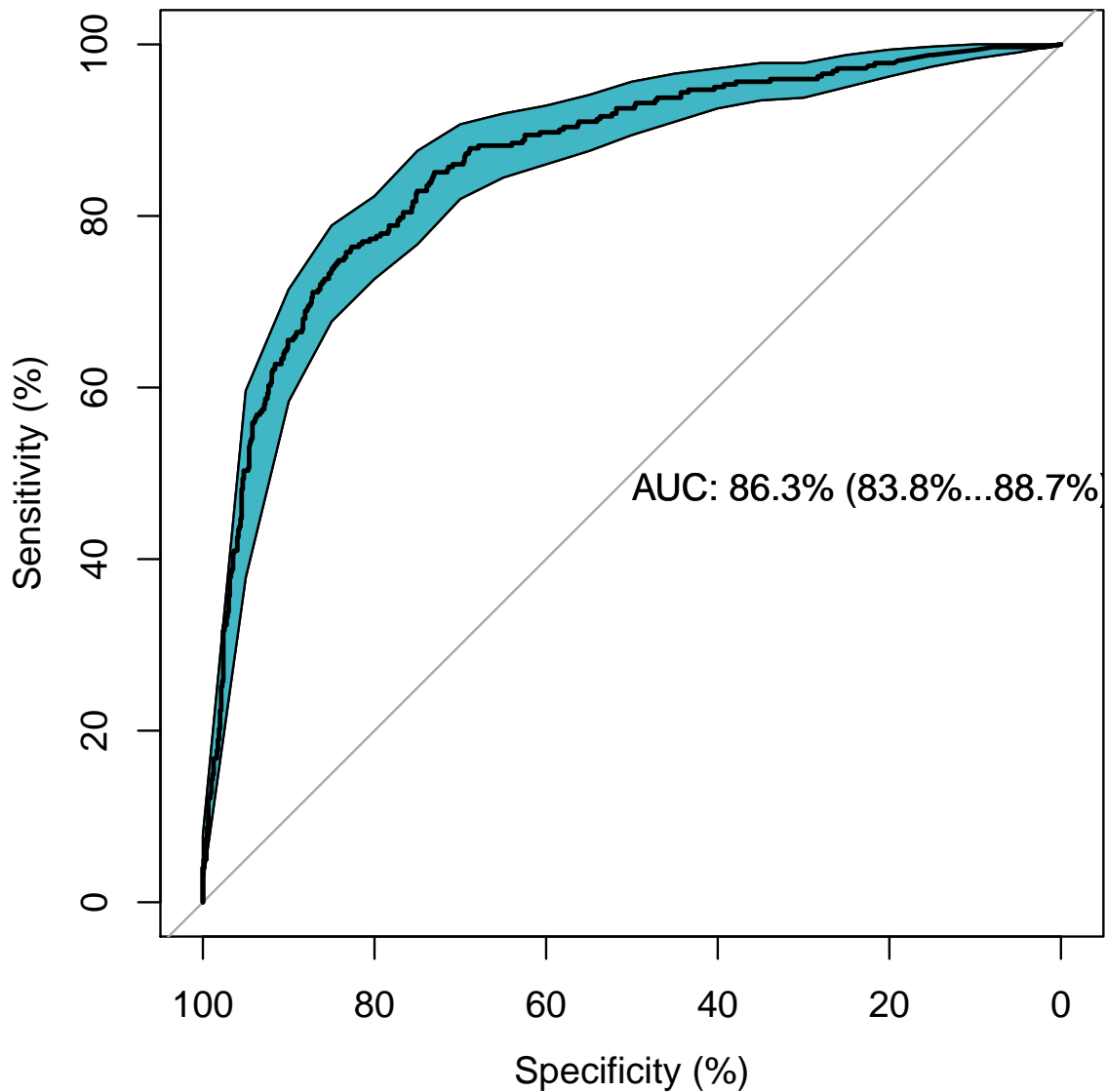
Conventional wisdom describes the two major political parties as structurally different institutions. The Democratic Party is often portrayed as a diverse coalition of economic and social issues with numerous internal factions, where the Republican Party is often described as more homogeneous. Regardless of the veracity of these claims (see Bartels 2018), it is worth investigating whether the effect of group support works differently across political parties. Figure 6.6 provides the results of model (4)'s specification estimated on Democratic and Republican candidates separately. For both parties the effect is positive and statistically significant even after including the controls for candidate viability. While the point estimates for Democrats is less than their Republican counterparts, we could not reject the hypothesis that these estimates are drawn from equivalent distributions. In sum, the density of a candidate's network appears to be of bi-partisan value to candidates seeking their party's nomination.

Table 6.3 provides the results for similar models estimating the impact on a candidates vote share. The relative magnitudes, directions, and significance of the coefficients in this model are comparable to Table 6.2's logit models. A two standard deviation increase in a candidate's existing network density is associated with an increase of nearly 10% of the vote. Given that the average difference between first and second place in primaries over this time period is also approximate 10%, network density has the potential to influence the outcomes of many contests. I present these results mainly because the more granular dependent variable allows for more precise estimates, which provides leverage in considering the time trends.

The four plots in Figure 6.7 present the results of Table 6.2's and Table 6.3's model (3) estimated annually from 1982 to 2014. The estimate for END scores impact on the likelihood of winning a primary are presented in row 1 and the effect on candidate vote share in row 2. In column 1 the effects for consequential open-seats are presented, where column 2 provides the estimates for all consequential primaries. This includes primary campaigns by opposition party members hoping to challenge incumbents in competitive districts. Point estimates are shaded blue if they are positive and statistically significant, grey if they are positive but statistically indistinguishable from 0, and red if they are negative. Of the 68 individual

Figure 6.6: Network Density and Likelihood of Winning Primary by Political Party
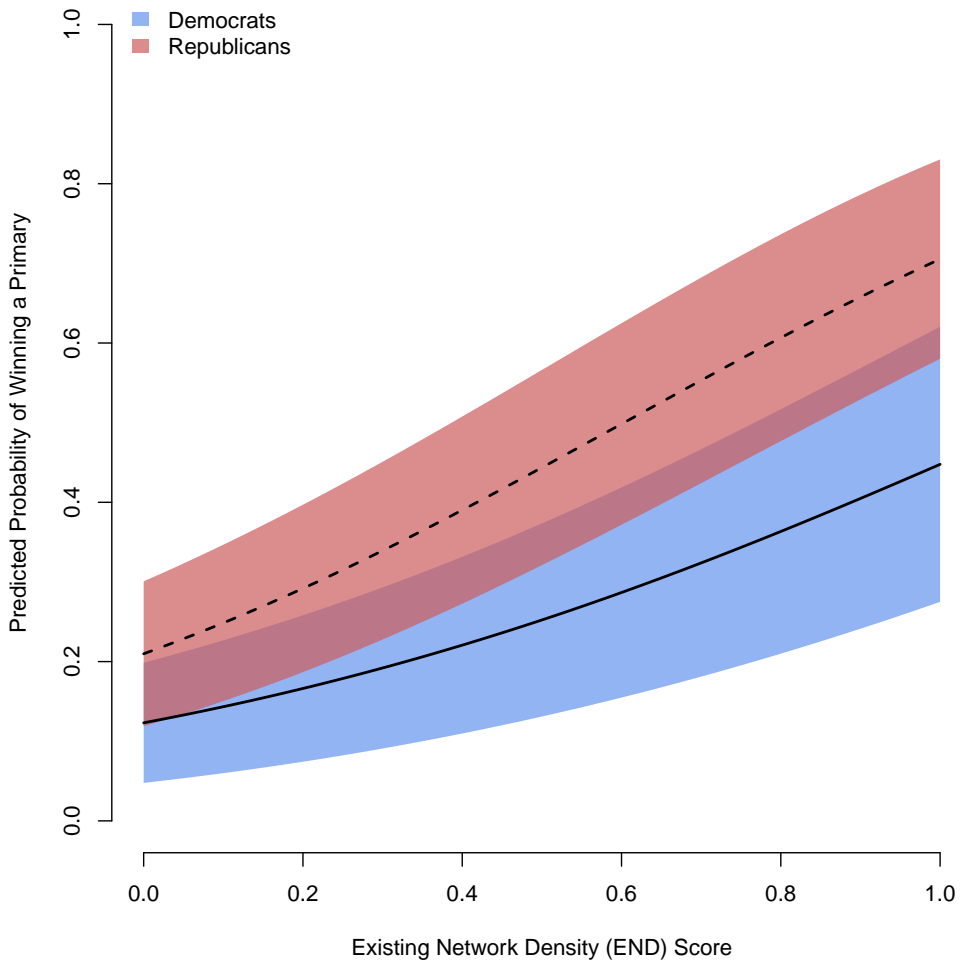
Table 6.3: Existing Network Density's Effect on Primary Vote Share

	Candidate Vote Share			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
END Score	0.449***	0.285***	0.194***	0.197***
	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.053)
Donors$_{t0}$			−0.0005*	−0.0003
			(0.0002)	(0.0002)
Log Funds		0.012***	0.011***	0.009***
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Party Donors		0.001***	0.0001	−0.0002
		(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0004)
Prior Office				0.044**
				(0.016)
END*Donors$_{t0}$			0.003***	0.002***
			(0.0004)	(0.001)
Intercept	0.162***	0.134***	0.160***	0.097***
	(0.006)	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.025)
Observations	3,755	3,742	3,742	1,119
R^2	0.183	0.271	0.331	0.387
Adjusted R^2	0.183	0.267	0.327	0.381
Year Fixed Effects	X	✓	✓	✓

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001
Standard errors clustered by primary contest.

Figure 6.7: Network Density and Primary Outcomes Over Time
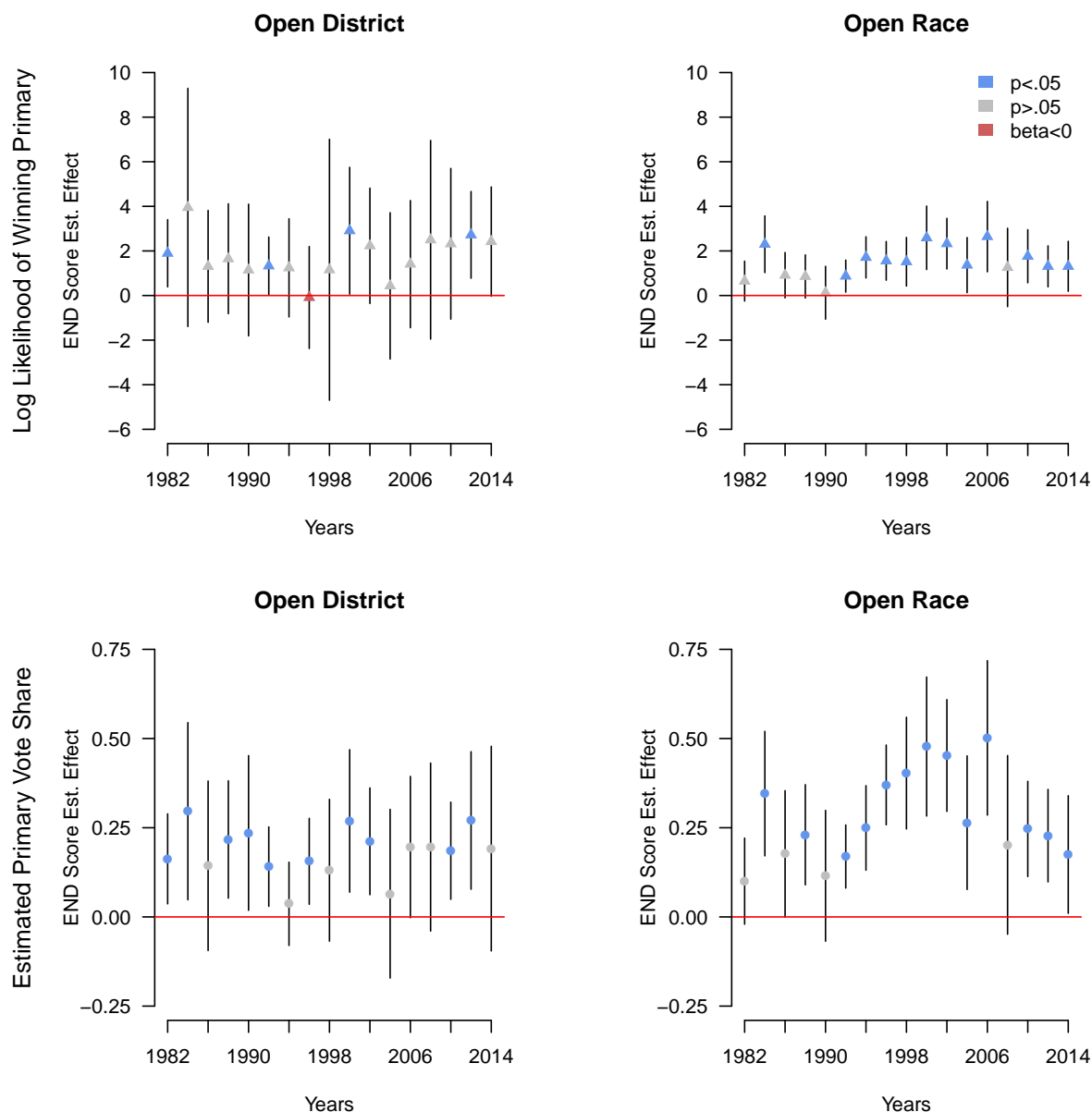
The first **row** of figures provide the estimated effect of a candidate's END score on the log-likelihood of them winning a consequential primary. The second **row** of figures provides the estimated effect of a candidate's END score on their vote share in a consequential primary. The first **column** provides the estimates for only consequential open-seat primaries. The second *column* provides the estimates for consequential open-seat primaries and the primaries for out-partisans challenging incumbents in competitive districts.

estimates, only 1 is negative, whereas 39 are positive and statistically significant.

Breaking the data into such small sub-samples leaves us with relatively few cases in a given year, and to maintain comparability across time, no models control for prior elected office. As a result, these models may be somewhat uninformative individually. But collectively they speak to the declining parties hypothesis. Not only are the effects of party network support generally positive across time, there is no evidence to suggest that there is a decline in that relationship. The estimates are roughly equivalent both before and after the Republican take-over of the House in 1994 and changes in campaign finance laws in 2004 – two cut-points that often demarcate shifts in political phenomena. So while there formal party organizations may have a reduced role in the nomination of candidates, this analysis finds little evidence that the network of party actors is at risk for losing sway over the primary process.

<center>***</center>

Taken together, the results from this section suggest that existing network density is, in fact, systematically benefiting candidates electoral prospects in congressional primaries. These effects appear consistent across time and parties at sufficient magnitudes to substantively impact their campaigns. However, one obvious criticism is that these dense networks are not causing their candidates to perform better in primaries, but are merely falling behind the eventual nominee. In the next section, I summarize the evidence suggesting that networks are, in fact, driving this relationship.

6.5 Bandwagons or Gatekeepers? Issues of Endogeneity

Are dense networks causing candidates to be more successful in primaries, or are more successful candidates attracting denser networks of support? Without addressing the potential for reverse causality, this analysis would be unable to speak to the underlying importance of group support. While far from the ideal, the following pieces of evidence suggest that networks are the drivers of this relationship.

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First, recent studies have largely found donor motivations to be expressive rather than instrumental (Barber 2016a; 2016b; Gimple, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz 2008). This is not to suggest that donors are not strategic. They are responsive to the competitiveness of the election (Hill and Huber 2017) and give more frequently in races with the potential to increase their party's seat share (Boatright 2013). However, they "appear to give out of desire to support causes they believe in rather than extract material benefits from politicians" (Albert et al. 2018). In his study of national party donors to House (2018) and Senate (2016) primary candidates, Hassell finds little evidence of bandwagoning in support of leading candidates. Using a Granger causality model, he finds that early national party support appears to drive later fundraising, rather than following early fundraising successes. In sum, little evidence suggests that primary voters exhibit bandwagoning tendencies.

Second, as we can see in the PA-13 example, network support does not always coordinate behind the frontrunner. If bandwagoning was the dominant driver of network behavior, we would have anticipated seeing Margolies with the densest network. She had the previous Congressional experience, the name recognition, the fundraising strength, the early endorsements, and TV ads featuring Bill Clinton. Table 6.4 surveys the (limited) public polling available from the 11 cases studies in Chapter 4.[6] Only 7 races had publicly available polling, and only in Virginia's 10th did the eventual winner lead in all available polls. In North Carolina's 12th and Michigan's 14th the polling was inconclusive with large numbers of undecided voters. In the remaining races the eventual primary winner was not the early frontrunner.

Third, the models presented above control for three variables traditionally associated with candidate viability: the number of campaign donors, the total fundraising of that campaign, and the quality of the candidate as measured by previous electoral experience. If donors are motivated solely by the desire to support the most viable candidate, we should see the effect of existing network density absorbed in models controlling for candidate viability.

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[6]These are the polls archived on *Ballotpedia*'s entries for each contests and those that could be found online through Google searches. It is possible that I am missing others, but like most data regarding congressional primaries, there are no central repositories, nor is the universe of potential polling organizations known beforehand to standardize monitoring.

Table 6.4: Networks Beating the Odds

	Lawrence	Hobbs	Clarke	Foster	DK
MIRS	25%	**38%**	22%	2%	13%
Lake Research	**35%**	27%	6%	0%	32%
Taret Insyght	22%	**32%**	15%	0%	31%
	Boyle	Margolies	Leach	Arkoosh	
Global Strategy	15%	**43%**	7%	2%	-
	Graves	Dietzel	Claitor	McCollough	DK
JMC Analytics*	2%	**11%**	**11%**	1%	30%
Glascock Group*	4%	19.2%	**20.3%**	4.4%	–
	Moolenaar	Mitchell	Konetchy		
EPIC-MRA	23%	**50%**	7%		
	Comstock	Marshall	Hollingshead	Lind	DK
Citizen's United	**44%**	10%	3%	3%	30%
	W. Coleman	Greenstein	Chivukula	Zwicker	DK
Monmouth	24%	**25%**	11%	6%	34%
	Adams	Graham	Battle	Brandon	DK
PP Polling	22%	**36%**	8%	5%	15%
Hamilton Campaigns	**26%**	19%	9%	4%	29%

*Democratic candidates omitted from polls of LA's Jungle Primary.
Note: Winning candidates in **bold**.

Yet across model specifications the effect remains positive, significant, and of roughly the same magnitude.

Fourth, Table 6.5 again provides the results of the Granger causality tests described in Chapter 4. As predicted, early fundraising advantages predict future fundraising advantages, as does the early support from dense networks predict future support from dense networks. More importantly, the results suggest that END scores Granger-cause candidate fundraising shares on primary day, in that early support from dense networks also predicts future fundraising share. This provides us with some evidence that network support is in fact driving the relationships, and not following perceptions of candidate viability. The results are most clear for donations made 90 and 180 days prior to the primary, but near conventional levels of significance even at a year prior to the primary when a large portion of the sample is missing – only about half of candidates have raised any funds a year prior to the primary (1869/3961).

Finally, the trends presented in the previous chapter also help alleviate concerns of endogeneity. If networks are simply supporting the candidates most likely to win, we should observe candidates with network support, all else equal, dropping out of primaries less often. Yet as the results of Chapter 5 demonstrate, all else equal, candidates with network support are more likely to drop out than those without it. These results signal that the balance of power between candidates and the networks that support them is biased in favor of the organized interests. Jacobson's "freebooting political entrepreneur" has no obligations and a limited relationship with the party network, and as a result is immune to the pressures to support the network's preferred candidate. But those candidates tied into the party network understand the important gatekeeping role these networks play in the distribution of campaign resources necessary for this and any future contests. Those with future political aspirations know that doing so after alienating the party is at best an uphill battle. Therefore, these candidates are more likely to acquiesce in the face of party pressures. In sum, the party networks are driving the relationship.

Table 6.5: Granger Causality Tests of Fundraising Share and Party Support

	Fund Share	END Score	Fund Share	END Score	Fund Share	END Score
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
END_{t-1}	0.103*** (0.026)	0.530*** (0.016)				
Fund Share$_{t-1}$	0.619*** (0.014)	0.003 (0.008)				
END_{t-2}			0.108*** (0.029)	0.495*** (0.016)		
Fund Share$_{t-2}$			0.555*** (0.017)	0.005 (0.009)		
END_{t-3}					0.065† (0.036)	0.406*** (0.018)
Fund Share$_{t-3}$					0.401*** (0.021)	0.016 (0.010)
Constant	0.123*** (0.023)	0.223*** (0.014)	0.150*** (0.025)	0.263*** (0.014)	0.234*** (0.032)	0.319*** (0.016)
Observations	2,539	2,461	2,356	2,297	1,869	1,850
R^2	0.449	0.569	0.330	0.563	0.182	0.550
Adjusted R^2	0.446	0.566	0.325	0.559	0.175	0.546
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

†p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Notes: The dependent variables are fundraising share and END-score of the candidates during the last 90 days of the primary. The independent variables are the same metrics calculated based on donations before times t-1, t-2, and t-3, or 90 days, 180 days, and 360 days before the primary, respectively. All models include year fixed effects.

6.6 Discussion

This chapter sought to demonstrate the systematic influence of party network support on the electoral prospects of candidates in consequential open-seat primaries for Congress. To do so, I estimate the impact of an original measure of group or network support – existing network density (END) scores – on the likelihood of winning a primary election. Across time, party, and numerous model specifications, the effect remained both substantively and statistically significant. A two-standard deviation increase in existing network density more than doubles the likelihood of winning a primary for the average candidate. And in contrast to the declining parties hypothesis – these effects generally do not appear to be decreasing or weakening overtime. While the potential endogeneity of network support is cause for concern, I provide evidence that suggests that network support is not bandwagoning behind the most viable candidate. Most importantly, the results of the models presented in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 are robust to numerous controls of candidate viability (fundraising and prior office), and the Granger causality tests suggest that END scores are driving viability, and not the other way around. Together, these data present a strong case for the influence of party networks in congressional primaries.

Some of the limitation of this approach bear repeating. First, these networks are derived entirely from federal campaign contributions, which while systematic, still limits the range of potential networks that can be detected. It requires that these networks both make contributions and do so to federal offices – two conditions that may not always be true. For example, Brenda Lawrence's network was primarily local in structure, consisting of local female mayors and relationships she'd built during her tenure as mayor. Rudy Hobbs and Hansen Clarke, in comparison, were tapped into primarily federal networks, through Hobbs connection to Rep. Sander Levin and Clarke's previous tenure in Congress. This may have the effect of artificially reducing the appearance of networked support among Lawrence's contributors in relation to her competitors. Future work will begin to incorporate state level campaign finance data into these networks, but even this may miss some truly local donor networks being activated at the federal level for the first time.

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While few networks observed in the field could be argued to fit this description, it is possible that some networks do not use campaign contributions as a method of supporting their chosen candidate. One possible example of this was the network of homeschoolers and church activists that supported Barry Loudermilk's campaign in Georgia's 11th district. Only a handful of insiders were willing to speak to us in this district, and so many of the conclusions are quite speculative, but those we did talk to stressed the grassroots nature of Loudermilk's support. This was a group that was not frequently activated in primary elections, but was well organized to advocate on behalf of homeschooling and faith-based issues. The resources they brought to Loudermilk were believed to be primarily in the form of labor: canvassers, phonebankers, and outreach to friends and family. Without knowing more it is impossible to say for sure exactly how his network of supporters operated, but it is possible that they eschewed financial support and instead focused on campaign volunteering. Networks of this nature would not be detected by the methods presented in this chapter.

But these two limitations, while important to address for future work, systematically underestimate the influence of networks of support. This method misses connections between local contribution networks and overlooks networks of support not of a financial nature. Therefore the effect of network support on primary election outcomes is likely to be greater than what is presented here.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

7.1 Party Networks and Primary Elections

With the prospects of a "Blue Wave" on the horizon, historic numbers of well-funded candidates have "flooded Republican House districts" ahead of the midterms (Schneider 2017a). But with their eyes on the general election, many national interest groups and in some instances the formal parties themselves, have been actively trying to shape the field in favor of the most electable candidates. This has left a lot of the Democrats on the receiving end of party pressures rather unhappy. Paul Perry, a progressive black candidate with no elected experience vying for the open seat in Pennsylvania's 7th district, lamented that the DCCC "didn't take an interest in [him] until they started to have doubts about the other top candidates: two white men who had already raised hundreds of thousands of dollars and a white woman who would loan her campaign $170,000" (Perry 2018). Running in the nearby 16th district, Jess King, supported by many local immigrants' rights and criminal justice reform groups, was distraught when EMILY's List began supporting Christina Hartman despite her under-performing Hillary Clinton in her run for the same seat in the previous cycle (Grim and Fang 2018). Mai Khanh Tran's interactions with the party were more blunt – "they showed her a discouraging poll and argued that she could not win – and risked fracturing the party" in the June primary for California's 39th district (Burns 2018).

But few candidates had interactions with the party network as visible as Levi Tilleman's in his Colorado 6th contest. Despite the DCCC's promise to remain neutral in the primary, they added his opponent, Jason Crow, to their "Red to Blue" program, which while not an official endorsement, does aim to help the candidates deemed most likely to flip seats come

November (CBS 2018). Tilleman later met with Minority Whip Steny Hoyer to discuss his campaign. Tilleman provided a rare (if not uncouth) insight to these interactions by secretly recording their conversation. In it, Hoyer admitted that the party had come to support Crow early, that it was providing him with fundraising assistance, polling information, and access to interest group endorsements, like the Sierra Club, and encouraged Tilleman to drop out of the contest (Pierce 2018). As Hoyer summarized, "staying out of primaries sounds small-D democratic, very intellectual, and very interesting, but if you stay out of primaries, and somebody wins in the primary who can't possibly win in the general..." He then came to the point of the conversation: "You keep saying I would like you to get out of the race, and of course that's correct" (Fang 2018) Even after these recordings were leaked to the press, most in the party stood behind Hoyer's comments. Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi noted that "if the realities of life is that some candidates can do better in the general than others, then that's a clear-eyed conversation that we should be having" (Caygle 2018). While Perry eventually dropped out of the primary, King, Tran, and Tilleman are all pushing forward with their campaigns against the headwinds of opposition from the extended party network.

These unfolding primaries reiterate the the three themes discussed throughout this dissertation. First, despite losing their formal power to make nominations, the constellation of organized interests constituting these parties continue to exercise influence over primary nominations. Of course the process still benefits the driven candidate, the talented fundraiser, and the electoral self-starter, but in the face of an abundance of ambition, party networks can still serve as influential field-shapers and gatekeepers.

Second, they hint at the underlying mechanism by which party network's wield their influence – the diverse array of resources that can help set candidates in primary elections over the top. Tilleman was distressed that the DCCC was assisting his opponent with fundraising, providing him polling information, securing him endorsements, and trying to push him out of the race. Efforts to clear the field, manage the competition in the primary, and navigate a candidate to the nomination are all tools at the network's disposal. Once they have shaped the field to the benefit of their preferred candidates, those candidates then have greater access to endorsements, fundraising assistance, polling information, campaign

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staffers and volunteers, and numerous other resources that they can boost their primary prospects. Importantly, while these resources are not necessarily exclusive to candidacies with the support of party networks – they are available in greater abundance and delivered with greater effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, any attempt to understand how these diverse actors with diverse resources are able to structure electoral outcomes should develop a measure that considers that variation.

Finally, they highlight just how difficult it is to observe party behavior in congressional nominations. Perry's observations only became public after he dropped out and wrote a tell-all piece about his experiences. King's and Tran's stories are only covered by the media with any detail because of how competitive the general election is expected to be. And Tilleman's case is only front-page news because of the extraordinary step he took in recording what are usually private conversations. As for the hundreds of other congressional primary campaign underway, little is reported. The blind spot is even more severe in nominations for seats that will not be competitive in the general election – the vast majority of seats in Congress. Despite the fact that less than 20% of congressional seats ever have the potential to be won by either party, these contests are those to receive the most news coverage and to factor most heavily into our theories and empirical investigations. Of those congressional primary races with local or national media coverage for the 2018 midterm cycle, few if any were safe seats. And thus far, only the media coverage of incumbent Dan Lipinski's competitive primary challenge provided any insight into a safe-seat. If our wish, however, is to understand the processes impacting the composition of Congress at large, then our approach has to consider how nominations work in these difficult to observe environments.

This project has attempted to do just that. By using the structure of campaign contribution networks to infer the existence of group support for individual primary candidates, this dissertation shows how political parties and the constellation of interest groups, partisan activists, and policy-demanding organizations that animate them still hold influence over the primary process. They can use their resources to push or pull candidates out of crowded primaries and then turn their attention toward securing their candidate the nomination. While the party networks may lack the formal powers to make nominations, they still possess the

resources and organization necessary to control the process.

To conclude, I briefly consider the implications of these findings and attempt to connect these results to larger questions of representation: How do interest-group controlled nominations affect the policy-making process in the United States? And how does the behavior of these groups contribute to the growing polarization we observe between the parties in Congress? Finally, I outline the next steps for this research agenda and summarize the conclusions of this project.

7.2 Implications

7.2.1 Nominations and Representation

Interest group control over nominations has important implications for studying public policy in the U.S. If organized groups are in fact mobilizing their support networks to help nominate, and later elect, candidates to Congress, than these groups must have reason to suspect some benefit from that candidate's election. Simply, why would these groups expend resources to nominate candidates who were not going to provide them some benefit in return? And given how determinative party membership is in roll call voting, what is the marginal benefit of electing a particular Democrat or a particular Republican?

According to numerous authors, members of Congress are more responsive to the policy demands of their more affluent constituents. Bartels (2008) find that Senators from 1988–1992 were more responsive to the policy the views of their constituents in the top third of the income distribution. Gilens (2012) also finds that policies tend to more strongly correlate with the preferences of the affluent more so than the poor. Gilens and Page (2014) go as far as to warn that "Americas claims to being a democratic society are seriously threatened," by the inequities they find in representation. The logic of this argument is compelling. Wealthier constituents are nearly 33% more likely to vote than their less affluent neighbors, are more likely to contact their legislators, are more likely to have crystallized issue preferences, have greater access to resources necessary for political participation, and are more likely and

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able to monitor their representatives behaviors (Bartels 2008, Converse 1990, Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), all factors that one would expect to influence the congruence between legislative behavior and constituent preferences.

The wealthy are also more likely to contribute to political campaigns (Confessore et al. 2015), with over 75% of donations coming from those in the top quarter of the income distribution (Verba et al. 1995). Previous research has found that campaign donors are more likely to be granted meetings with policy makers (Brookman and Kalla 2016), and that among legislative staff, their recall of relevant issues in the district "is biased in favor of active and resource-rich constituents" (Miler 2009). Additionally, overlap between a donors' employment and a congressperson's committee membership increases the likelihood of receiving a campaign contribution (Canes-Wrone, Thrower, and Barber n.d.). In comparing the representational congruence for donors, co-partisans, supporters, and registered voters, Barber (2016b) finds that "senators' preferences reflect the preferences of the average donor better than any other group."

Yet recent studies have largely found the motivations of individual to be expressive rather than instrumental (Barber 2016a; 2016b; Gimple, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz 2008). They instead "appear to give out of desire to support causes they believe in rather than extract material benefits from politicians" (Albert et al. 2018). Even lobbying efforts and PAC contributions have been found to be primarily motivated at maintaining *existing* relationships with legislators (Victor and Koger 2016), and not attempts to "buy" votes or a legislator's time.

These two sets of findings, the representational congruence of campaign contributor preferences with legislative behavior and the non-instrumental motivations for donating to a campaign, in combination with the results of this analysis, suggest that any representational shortcomings would not be ameliorated by decreasing economic inequality or strictly regulating campaign finance. The congruence comes from organized interests nominating champions to elected office, who then pursue their true preferences. Just as Poole (2007) posits that legislators "die in their ideological boots," I would posit that legislative champions are forever "one of us" to their network of supporters.

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This should affect how scholars study the policy-making process. As Fiorina (1989, p. 35) noted, "for every voter a congressman pleases by a policy stand he will displease someone else." Any efforts to pursue legislation would alienate some voters while attracting the support of others. But given the central role interest groups and activists in the nomination of candidates, legislators pursuing policies and developing voting records more extreme than even their co-partisan constituents should not be surprising. These efforts are made on behalf of the party coalitions, who should be viewed as the audience for most consequential legislative activity. As Bawn et al. (2012) note, if we accept the role that policy demanding interest play in nomination than the "agenda of policy demanders external to the institution [of Congress] would be examined in context of legislative party leaders' decisions and actions." For example, Republican reticence on requiring background checks for purchasing firearms despite the approval of the vast majority of Republicans becomes less anomalous if we consider the National Rifle Association as a central player in the Republican Party network. Understanding the factional composition of nominating coalitions can therefore help explain a party's legislative agenda.

And with the amounts of time and effort required to pass legislation and the discouraging odds of final passage, only the most committed to a policy would make the long-shot investment. This in turn could create an extreme policy agenda for a party composed primarily of moderate members. If each official holds only a single extreme position, but that is the sole position that holds sufficient weight to justify the commitment, then the final roll calls considered by the entire body would all be more extreme than the median preference of even the median co-partisan. This divergence is the subject of the next section.

7.2.2 Contributing to the Divide

Why have the parties diverged so dramatically? Despite the consensus surrounding the existence of elite polarization, a definitive cause for this shift has remained elusive. The most direct explanation is that legislators are representing increasingly divided electorates. But the evidence is inconclusive (see Abramowitz 2010, Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2010). Voters

are often found to have predominantly moderate policy views (Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder 2006; Levendusky, Pope, and Jackman 2008) and representatives have been found to have positions considerably more extreme than their constituents (Clinton 2006; Gerber and Lewis 2004). Hill and Tausanovitch (2013) compare polarization trends within both the general public and the U.S. Senate between 1956 and 2012 and conclude that the increasing dispersion of views between the parties in Congress has occurred in the absence of similar divergence among the public, suggesting that "it is unlikely that changes in public preferences alone explain the widening gulf between the two parties."

What about changes in party activists? Aldrich accounts for the divergence as a balance "between appealing for general election support by moving toward the policy center of the whole electorate and appealing for nomination support by moving toward the center of the party activists" (1995, p. 190). The evidence that primary voters are driving polarization is limited (see Alher, Citrin, Lenz 2015; DeMora et al. 2015; Sides et al. 2018). Moreover, elected officials have been found to be more extreme than even their co-partisan constituents (Bafumi and Herron 2010). In sum, elected officials do not appear more responsive to the primary electorate as a whole, but to the activists and supporters who provide them with the resources necessary to secure office.

If we assume that representatives are responsive to the preferences of their contributors, then changes in the preferences of these actors could help explain the changes in polarization. Figure 7.1 provides the density plots for the distribution of partisanship in individual campaign contribution behavior. For each individual who made more than one contribution in each year, I calculate the average share of those donations that went to Democratic candidates. The plots provide the distribution of this share among all donors. While there is a small population of individuals who make bi-partisan, across time the modal behavior of individuals is entirely partisan. A shift can be seen, however, in the behavior of PACs, as displayed in Figure 7.2. Here, the shift from the bi-partisan behavior of the 1980s has given way to the much more polarized contributions of recent years. This data alone cannot determine how the polarization of PAC contributions and legislators is related, but these two trends appear to be moving in tandem, particularly with the dramatic shift following

the Republican takeover of the House in 1994.

If we instead conclude that elected officials are representative of the networks of supporters that secured them the nomination, then we would look to changes in the behavior of these party networks to explain the historically recent surge in polarization. Modularity is a measure of how clearly divided a network is into sub-groups (see Newman and Girvan 2004).[1] Figure 7.3 provides the modularity of campaign contribution networks in nine medium sized states.[2] For each network, I include all donors who made primary contributions to candidates competing in that state or were from that state. Donors are connected if they contributed to two or more of the same candidates. Mirroring the results from Figure 7.2, these networks at the state level have become increasingly partitioned into two sub-groups – Republicans and Democrats – overtime. Taken together, it is safe to conclude that the networks of campaign contributors have become progressively more divided over the past thirty five years, and that this division has been driven more so by changes in PAC and networked behavior than that of individuals.

The importance of these networks in determining the nominee would place increased importance on the factional composition of the party networks on the ideological positioning of the parties. A Congress composed of group-supported legislators could result in a parties of single-issue champions pursuing a collective legislative agenda not empirically dissimilar from a platform pursued by one composed of ideological extremists. If the interest groups and activists within the party coalition have become more cooperative, then the expected the expected preference profile of a given nominee from that party would also become increasingly homogeneous, which would present itself as increasingly divided parties.

This is of particular concern to scholars who present strengthening parties as a potential means of addressing polarization (La Raja and Schaffner 2015; Pildes 2011; Weiner and

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[1]For example, in Figure 4.4 from §4.5.3, the first network would be extremely modular, as it consists of three distinct sub-groups. The second network would have a very low modularity, as there appear to be no distinct groups within the network.

[2]Because I restrict the network to those who donated to multiple of the candidates, I did not analyze states with less than three congressional districts, fearing that the relatively few number of candidates in the state might artificially deflate the measures. While I present the findings for a random sample of those remaining states, the trend is common across them – always positive, usually significant.

Figure 7.1: Partisan Divide in Individual Contributors
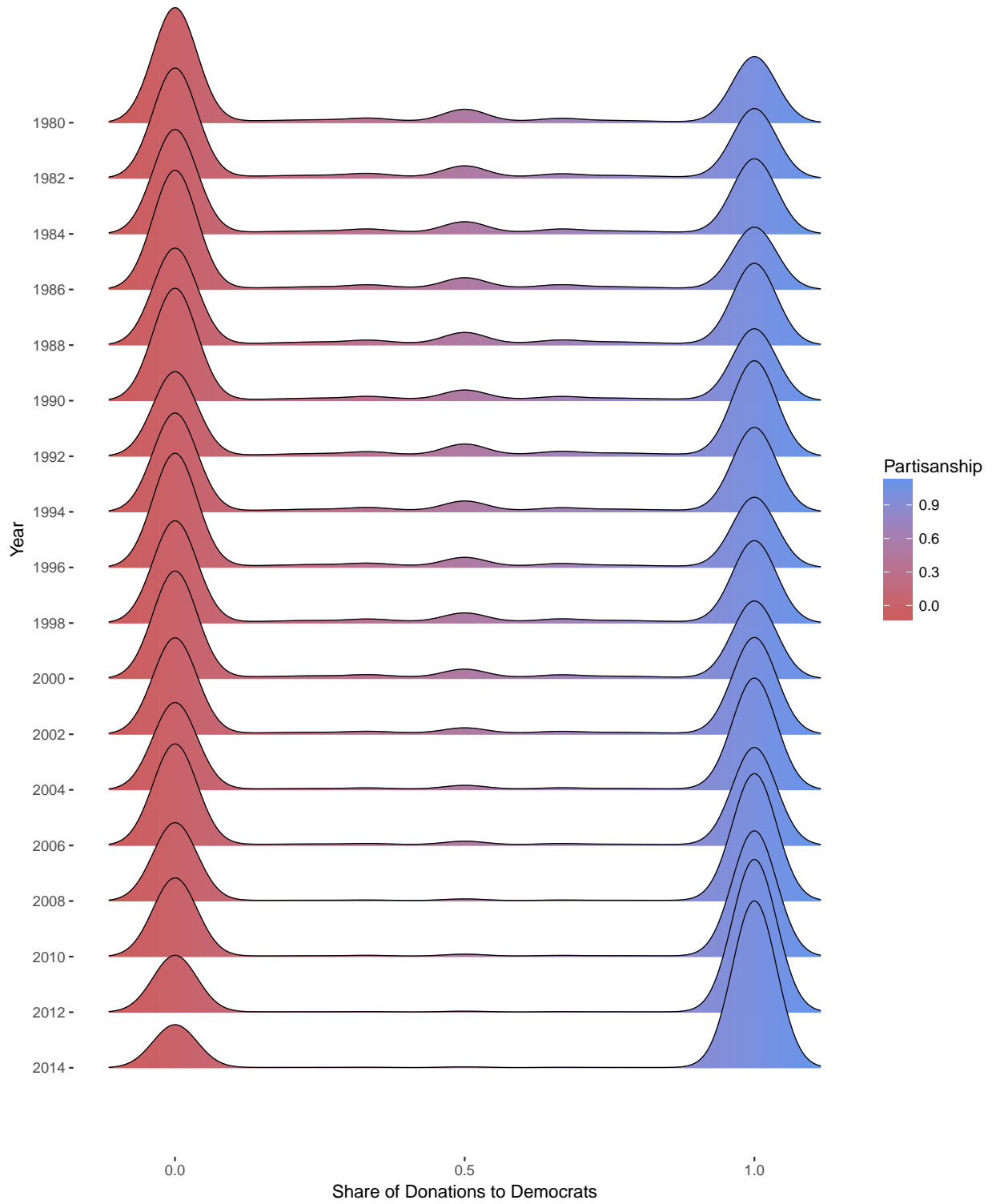
Figure 7.2: Partisan Divide in PAC Contributors
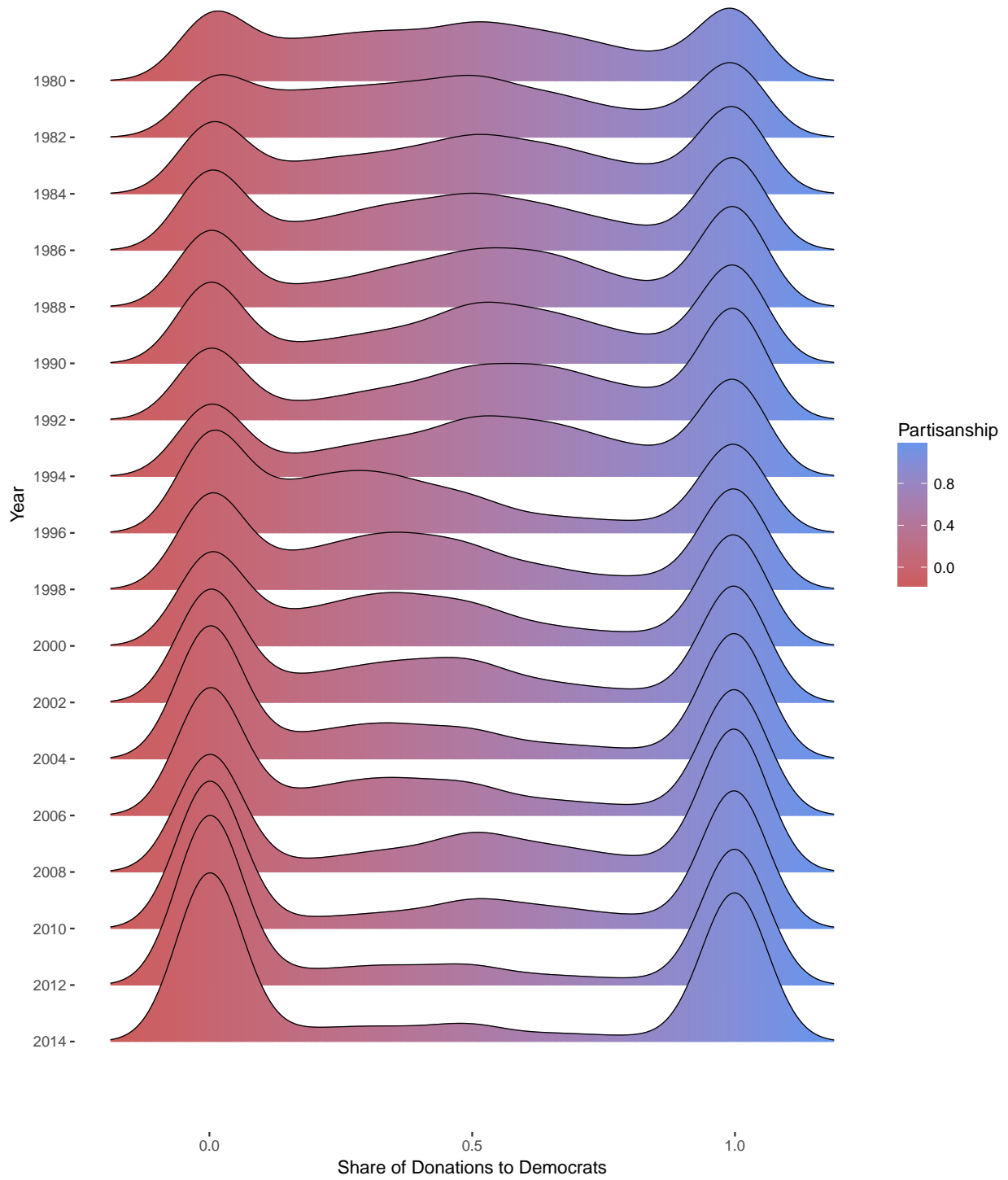
Figure 7.3: Modularity of State Primary Donor Networks
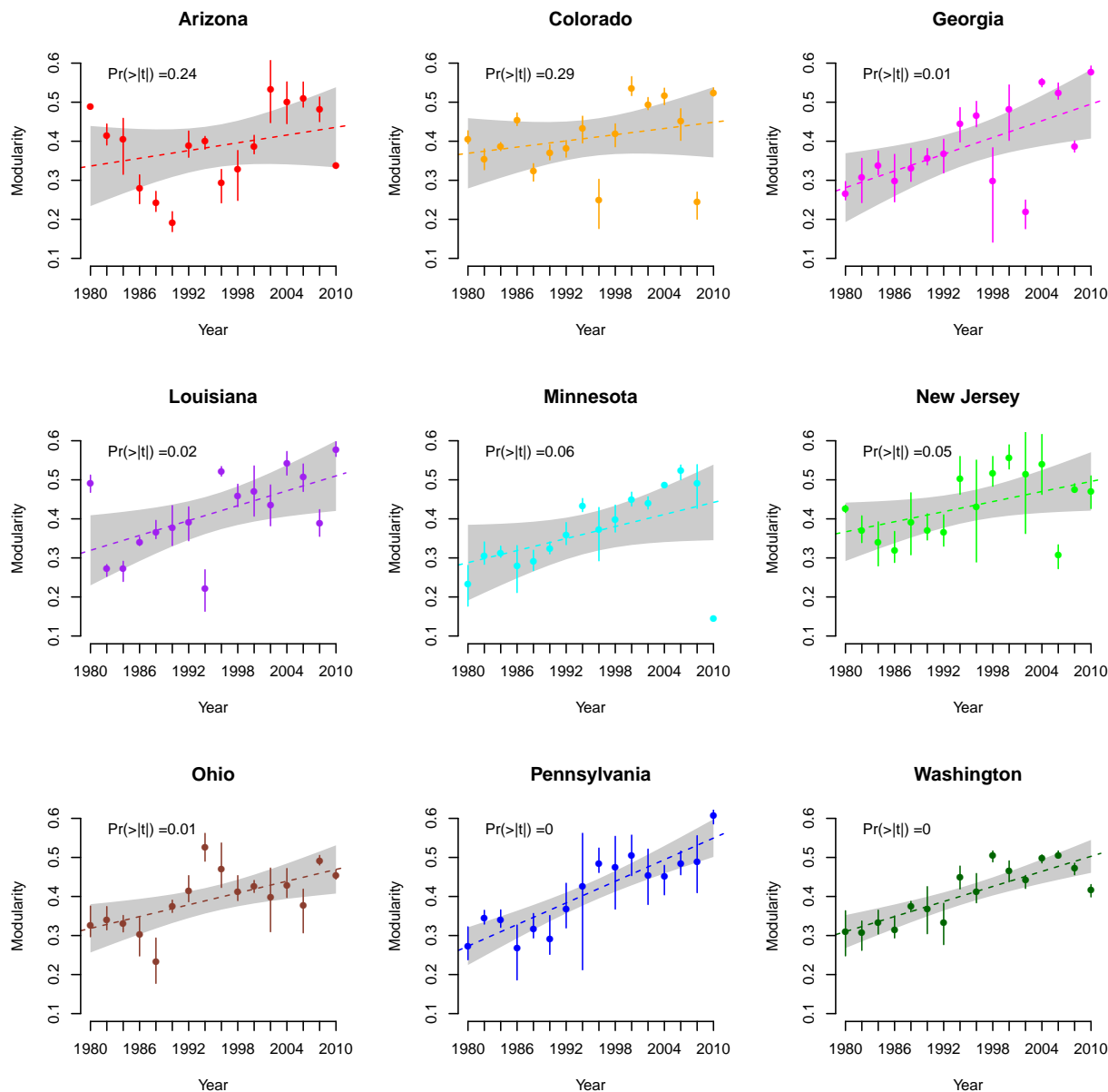
Vandewalker 2015). As Hassell noted "[e]mpowering a party seem, perhaps unsurprisingly, to empower those who control the institution" (2018, p. 190). If the factional composition of political parties increasingly sorts to two camps of intense, but non-confrontational interest groups, then strengthening their ability to select the nominee would only increase their ability to nominate dedicated champions of their cause. Even reforms to direct greater authority

only to the formal party organization would be quickly circumvented by the weak incentives to participate in primaries for safe-seats. For example, one proposed reform involves requiring the formal party to ratify the decision of primary elections. This, however, would put the parties in the same untenable position that currently limits their participation in primaries – attempts to circumvent the "popular will" are widely criticized by the public (or more accurately the members of the ill-favored faction posing as the public). Parties would only find the incentive to participate in the handful of competitive seats that could determine party control of the House (races where they already participate, and do so with a great deal of success, see Hassell 2018).

More work is necessary to untangle this complex relationship. However, the congruence of legislative behavior with donor preferences, the central role donors play in the construction of party networks, and the polarization of party networks, are all at least suggestive of a relationship between political polarization and the factional composition of party coalitions. These remarks are obviously meant more as a jumping off point than a a definitive statement on the subject. The need for greater attention to the role organized interests play in the platforms of parties, the policy positioning of legislators, and the legislative agendas of governing majorities, however, is more concrete.

7.3   Next Steps

7.3.1   Champions in the Arena

If we accept this view, how do group-supported nominees differ in their specific legislative behavior? Does the nature of these support networks effect how effective (see Volden and Wiseman 2014) particular congressman are in the legislative process? Are candidates supported by particular interest groups more likely to win coveted committees seats? party leadership posts? nomination for higher office? Given the obstacles to passing legislation, in what other ways do members of Congress pursue their supporters goals? Do they facilitate interactions with the bureaucracy? Do they provide access to other supportive members? Is

bi-partisanship a byproduct of bi-partisan coalitions or a lack of organized interests?

These questions are only a truncated list of unanswered research questions. Given the prevalence of candidate-centered theories of political parties and elections, much of the work on congressional behavior is due to be re-evaluated or at least replicated under more policy-forward assumptions on behalf of legislators. If the actions of legislators are not those of single-minded seekers of re-election and the behaviors of policy champions thrown into the legislative leviathan, we must reconsider many of our foundational assumptions about how Congress operates.

7.3.2 Beyond Density

As I mentioned in §4.5.3, there are alternative ways to consider the organization of factions within a party network. While I focus on the density of the density of existing networks of support on a candidate's electoral prospects, it would be possible to consider these individual networks within the larger party network. For example, are networks of donors located more toward the center of a party network more influential in the primary process? Desmarais, La Raja, and Kowal (2015) find that House challengers closer to the center of the party's network are more likely to win their general election campaigns. My initial investigation finds a similar relationship in the primary election. Importantly, both the END score and centrality measure of a primary candidate's donor network significantly increase the likelihood of winning an open-seat primary. These findings together suggest that while organized interests are important in determining the outcome of primary elections, so too does that organization's relationship to the party network at-large.

These larger networks also have the potential to tell us more about the dynamics of candidate emergence. I would argue that areas with more divided partisan networks should be more ripe for partisan competition, whereas areas with more cooperative party networks should see greater cooperation. In other words, regardless of the number of interest groups or activist networks within a particular district, the relationship between those networks should influence the number of potentially viable candidacies. If unions and pro-choice

organizations do not frequently cooperate, then there exists two distinct networks of support that could support two different candidates in a primary. The business community and religious evangelicals may both be organized in a district, but if the network of supporters largely overlaps, then we should see the network move behind a single nominee. While strictly exploratory at this point, in the districts I have analyzed from 1982–2002, this appears to be the case. More candidates file to run for office in districts with more factionalized networks of primary contributors. By including outcomes before the primary in my analysis, I would provide more general evidence for my underlying theory of the importance of group support, and further alleviate concerns about network bandwagoning.

While this project addresses the influence party networks have over the nomination of candidates, another question is how these party networks influence a candidate's likelihood of winning the general election. In the handful of competitive seats, does having a more unified party network benefit a candidate in the general election? Can losing the support of a party's coalition make a safe seat competitive? Fouirnaies and Hall (2018) find that divisive primaries decrease the nominees eventual vote share and likelihood of winning the primary in the general election, but are these effects predicated on a type of primary environment? Would we observe differences based on whether the competition was within the party coalition or between the party coalition and an outsider?

7.3.3 ENDless Possibilities

And finally, I wish to extend the applicability of END scores to a wider range of electoral phenomenon. I am currently extending the analysis beyond primaries for the House of Representatives to also include gubernatorial, senatorial, and state legislative primaries. The data for statewide primaries has been generously provided by Hirano et al. (2010), but is still being gathered for state legislative primaries. Demonstrating the versatility of this theory to explain party behavior, and connecting the motivations of these actors across electoral offices, will help further solidify the notion that interest groups and policy-demanders are driving these relationships and that the organization and durability of these networks transcends

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the individual candidacies and campaigns of particular politicians.

END scores also have the potential to help us understand another source of incumbency advantage. For example, in addition to the relationships presented previously, incumbents with lower END scores are more likely to experience a competitive primary, more likely to lose their primary, and more likely to lose their general election. Much more work is necessary to alleviate massive concerns of endogeneity in these particular relationships – the networks for incumbents are inherently endogenous considering they ran for office in the previous election cycle, and therefore difficult if not impossible to separate the influence of organized groups and re-mobilized candidate-centered re-election constituencies – but the initial findings suggest that the while it is easiest to observe the influence of party networks in open-seat contests, this is not the only avenue by which they attempt to shape the political system.

An important extension would attempt to not only account for the structure of party networks, as these scores do, but to also account for their content. As briefly mention in Chapter 5, Arkoosh's network was structured around the centrally located American Medical Association, whereas Boyle's had a core of organized labor. Perhaps by leveraging the occupational information in campaign finance disclosures or integrating public occupational directories, similar to what previous work has done for doctors (Bonica, Rosenthal, and Rothman 2015), lawyers (Bonica and Sen 2017), and bureaucrats (Bonica, Chen, and Johnson 2015), it would be possible to account for the industry or policy of interest motivating the organization of these interest groups. If one could demonstrate that these groups were organized by these particular policy demands, then one could be more confident in concluding that they were in fact driving the relationships observed in Chapters 4 and 5.

7.4 Summary

I set out with three goals in this project. First, I wanted to demonstrate that networks are influential players in congressional nominations. Through a series of case studies from the 2014 primary election cycle, I demonstrate that formal parties, candidate-centered ma-

chines, interest groups, and activist networks all have the potential to shape the political environment in favor of their preferred candidate. They do this by systematically influencing the field of candidates – recruiting those supportive of their ambitions and dissuading those candidates seen less as champions of their cause – and by marshaling scarce campaign resources – campaign staff, endorsements, campaign funds, and voter mobilization efforts – on behalf of their campaign. In an electoral environment lacking media coverage, scholarly attention, and voter participation, these resources were often able to determine the outcome of these contests.

Second, given the difficulties of observing the efforts of these networks, I sought to develop a novel measure of group support that could be gathered systematically for a large number of representative races. I create a measure – existing network density – that attempts to assess the degree to which a candidate's supporters consistently work together in their party's primary. By observing the behavior of a candidate's donor poll over time, I can isolate a durable contingent of supporters. By considering how inter-connected their network is, I can account for how organized this group is in the political process. With the standardized reporting requirements and the ubiquity of fundraising as a measure of candidate strength, using campaign finance records allows us to assess the presence of group support systematically among nearly every candidate who competed in a primary since 1980.

Third, I wanted to test whether this measure of support significantly and substantively impacted the electoral prospects of candidates competing in primary elections. I find that all else equal, candidates with the support of durable networks with greater density are *more* likely to drop out of their party's primary. Those candidates with the support of groups within the larger party network are more likely to respond to party pressures to clear the field for another candidate than those electoral self-starters unconnected to the party infrastructure. The finding that candidates with higher END scores are more likely to drop out may seem at odds with this dissertation's overall argument that network support is a political advantage to individuals seeking their party's nomination. But as the examples in Arizona's 7th, Pennsylvania's 6th, and Pennsylvania's 13th district show, what may in the short-term appear a disadvantage for a candidate is often a long-term benefit in the form of

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a maintained relationship with the group network.

In the primary, however, I find that candidates with the support of denser durable networks and thus more likely to have access to the diverse array of campaign resources are more likely to win the nomination. I alleviate some concerns of endogeneity by demonstrating that existing network density Granger causes future candidate viability as measured by future fundraising successes and that the effects from my models are robust in the face of numerous controls for candidate viability. Moreover, if networks were simply bandwagoning behind the inevitable winner, than we would not observe existing network density encouraging candidates to drop out of primaries.

Together these three exercises demonstrate that political parties – broadly defined – still maintain influence over the selection of nominees. Primary elections may have taken the most powerful tool for selecting a nominee from all but a handful of parties, but these efforts only changed the mechanism by which parties control the nomination. What was once a conflict contained to a smoke-filled back room negotiation or a lively floor debate at a convention, has simply been dragged out into light. Despite the prevalence of candidate-centered theories of congressional nominations, these coalitions of interest groups, politicians, activists appear to still decide.

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