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Run, Jane, Run! Gendered Responses to Political Party Recruitment

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Abstract Many researchers point to gender inequities in party recruitment practices to explain women's underrepresentation on the ballot. However, there has been little systematic research about how men and women respond to recruitment, so we do not know whether gender-balanced recruitment would actually lead to gender-balanced outcomes. We conduct two studies to address this question. First, in cooperation with a county Republican Party, we identically recruited 5510 male and 5506 female highly active party members to attend a free candidate training seminar. Republican women were half as likely to respond to the invitation as men. Second, we conducted a survey experiment of 3960 voters on the Utah Colleges Exit Poll. Republican men's level of self-reported political ambition was increased by the prospect of elite recruitment significantly more than Republican women's, thereby increasing the gender gap vis-à-vis the control. The gender gap in the effect of recruitment on political ambition among Democrats was much smaller. Together, these findings suggest that to fully understand the role recruitment plays in women's underrepresentation, researchers must understand the ways in which men and women respond to recruitment, not just whether political elites engage in gendered recruitment practices.

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Introduction

> "One of the most difficult things is convincing women to run or getting
> women to run….I think that's the biggest stumbling block to get over."
> North Carolina Representative Mia Morris, quoted in Sanbonmatsu 2006, 126

Political recruiters regularly cite women's hesitancy to run as a major impediment
to increasing the number of women in office. The conventional wisdom is that
women are much less likely to respond positively to recruitment efforts and have to
be asked to run many times before they will say yes. Yet, to the extent that academic
research has studied recruitment's role in the underrepresentation of women, it has
focused on who gets asked, not how those who are asked respond (Crowder-Meyer
2013; Kazee and Thornberry 1990; Maestas et al. 2005; Niven 1998; Rozell 2000;
Sanbonmatsu 2006; though see Fox and Lawless 2010 and Preece and Stoddard
2015a). Understanding whether there are gendered patterns in responses to
recruitment is important because if women are systematically less responsive to
recruitment, then even perfectly equitable recruitment practices will not eliminate
the gender gap in representation. Hence, this paper focuses on a crucial question:
how do men and women react when they are recruited?

To answer this question, we conducted two studies. First, we conducted a field
study with the Utah County Republican Party to recruit male and female party
activists. We recruited 11,016 highly engaged party members (5510 men and 5506
women) to attend a free, party-sponsored "Prospective Candidate Information
Seminar." We tracked (1) who logged on to the event website to find out more
information about the seminar, (2) who registered for the seminar, and (3) who
attended the seminar. This allowed us to monitor responses to recruitment for both
men and women. Second, we partnered with the Utah Colleges Exit Poll to conduct
a survey experiment on 3960 voters. A random subset of voters were asked if they
would ever consider running for local office, while others were asked if they would
ever consider running "if a party or community leader encouraged them to do so."
We then examined the difference-in-difference between men and women's
responses to this question.

In both of these studies, we found highly gendered patterns in participants'
responses. In the first, we find that women were *half* as likely to respond to the
invitation as men across all of the behavioral outcome measures. In our second
study, men were significantly more likely to respond affirmatively to the recruitment
message than to the control; the women were unchanged by the recruitment
message. This pattern was much stronger among Republican respondents than
among Democratic respondents.

In two studies with very different outcome measures, we find the same result:
Republican women are not as responsive to recruitment as men. Our second study
suggests this pattern is much weaker among Democrats, though Democratic women
are less politically ambitious than Democratic men. This finding points to the

importance of exploring how individuals interpret and internalize recruitment efforts, not just the ways in which elites attempt to recruit individuals. They also indicate that political elites who are interested in increasing women's representation will likely have to take extra steps to recruit women beyond those they use to recruit men.

The Role of Recruitment in American Politics

Although the conventional wisdom suggests that most American political candidates are "self-starters," the typical candidate emergence process is much more complex. Primary elections and candidate-centered campaigns render American parties less influential than parties in many other countries, but an individual's decision to run for office is a multifaceted calculation that frequently includes cues from their party. In fact, research suggests that party cues are one of the most influential factors in the decision-making process for both local and national candidates (Huckshorn and Spencer 1971; Kazee and Thornberry 1990; Moncrief et al. 2001; Maestas et al. 2006; Sanbonmatsu et al. 2009; Fox and Lawless 2010; Broockman 2014). It is not surprising, then, that since at least the 1980s, national party organizations have taken an active role in finding promising candidates and encouraging them to run for Congress (Gibson et al. 1985; Aldrich 2000; Maestas et al. 2005).

At the local level, parties also tend to be highly involved in recruitment efforts (Gibson et al. 1985; Aldrich 2000; Sanbonmatsu 2006). Crowder-Meyer's 2008 Survey of County Party Leaders, the most recent and complete data available on this subject, finds that about 80 % of county parties reported commonly recruiting candidates for county legislative offices such as county commissioner. They were less involved with other offices—35.5 % with mayors and town councils, 64.6 % with sheriffs/clerks/treasurers, and 42.1 % with legal offices—but these numbers are still fairly high, especially since local offices are often nonpartisan (2011, 120). Furthermore, when asked whether their county party organization has assisted candidates by contributing money, organizing fundraisers and campaign rallies, writing press releases, producing campaign literature, etc., an overwhelming number of party leaders said that they did (124).

Consequently, among first-time state legislators, only about a third make the decision to run on their own (Moncrief et al. 2001). Most are invited and/or encouraged to run by those around them—frequently local or state party officials or current office-holders (39). Sanbonmatsu finds that even though parties do not have full control over candidate selection in the United States, they are generally active recruiters: nominations are "too important to leave to chance" (2006, 38). And even if self-starters self-nominate, party operatives will often "continue to recruit until they believe they have the strongest candidate" (2006, 38).

Furthermore, the role of recruitment is likely even more important for women than for men. In a recent survey of male and female state legislators, Carroll and Sanbonmatsu find that more than half of female state legislators had not seriously considered running for office before a party leader suggested it to them (2013, 49).

These numbers are much higher than for male state legislators. This leads Carroll and Sanbonmatsu to argue that women tend to make decisions about office-holding through a "relationally-embedded" process, rather than the traditional model of self-starting political ambition (61). Recruitment is an important part of this process. In short, any analysis of women's underrepresentation must consider the role of political party recruitment.

Gendered Political Networks

We know recruitment plays an important role in candidate emergence, perhaps especially for female candidates. However, recruitment generally takes place within existing social networks, which can create problems for women's representation in politics. Existing political networks tend to be male-dominated, making it more difficult for women to have access to the resources they provide. Male-dominated party networks can limit women's advancement in politics in several ways; for example, current leaders tend to identify those who are similar to them as the best potential leaders (Niven 1998). Furthermore, male party chairs are much less likely than female chairs to think of female candidates when asked to name potential candidates for upcoming races (Niven 1998; Crowder-Meyer 2013). Sanbonmatsu's interviews with party leaders, politicians, and activists also highlight that recruiters tend to cull personal networks for potential candidates—and personal networks tend to be gendered (2006, pp. 131–132).

As a result, Lawless and Fox find that 45 % of professional women, compared to 52 % of professional men, had an electoral gatekeeper suggest that they run for office (2010, pp. 314–315). Women were also less likely to have been recruited multiple times or by multiple sources (316). When other factors are held constant, Lawless and Fox found that the gender gap in recruitment actually increased significantly: the "average" professional woman had a .60 predicted probability of being recruited, while the "average" professional man's predicted probability was .76 (317).

This may explain why places in which political parties are more involved in the recruitment of candidates do not necessarily have more women in office. Sanbonmatsu (2006) and Niven (2006) find either null or negative effects of party involvement in recruitment on women's representation. However, Crowder-Meyer concludes that whether party recruitment helps or hurts women "depends on the specific characteristics and choices of party leaders" (2013, 409). Recruitment that works through party activists and officeholders disadvantages women; female party leaders and those who recruit from local office holders, their personal networks, and education and child-related groups tend to identify more female candidates to support (406–407).

In summary, there are two important findings in the existing literature on gender and recruitment. First, women are more likely than men to need recruitment to be interested in running for office. Second, women are less likely than men to be recruited. Perhaps the solution, then, is to make recruitment more

gender-balanced—if parties had more equitable recruitment practices, would the gender gap in representation narrow?

Responses to Recruitment

Before we can conclude that gender equitable recruitment practices would narrow the gender gap, we need to examine how men and women respond to recruitment. This is an empirical question with important theoretical implications. Researchers tend to focus on political elites' recruitment efforts without seriously considering how recruits may interpret, internalize, and respond to these efforts. But, the effectiveness of recruitment depends both on how political recruiters act and how political recruits react. The former has been studied much more than the latter.

While existing research does not settle the question of how men and women respond to recruitment, there are a number of reasons to be skeptical that women will be as responsive as men. For example, women tend to have lower levels of political ambition than similarly-qualified men (Lawless and Fox 2010). Based on structured interviews and survey data, Lawless and Fox conclude that "women rely on a more exhaustive set of criteria when assessing whether they are qualified to run for office" (126). Men are much more likely than women to judge themselves against current real candidates rather than a mythical ideal candidate (128–129). Kanthak and Woon observe a similar tendency in a controlled laboratory setting, and they credit it to women's election aversion: "even when controlling for task ability, women are less likely to run." (2015, 606). Preece and Stoddard also find gender gaps in political ambition as a consequence of competition aversion among women (2015b). Because of gender differences in political ambition, perceptions of qualifications, tolerance for competition, and many other potential factors, even identical recruitment methods may produce gendered outcomes.

Elite interviews with party recruiters seem to echo these findings. Party leaders often observe that "men are much more willing to jump into it [running for office] than women. You need to push women a lot harder to do it…." (Sanbonmatsu 2006, 126). One leader explained that "one of the most difficult things is convincing women to run or getting women to run…often times what I hear is, 'I could never do that,' 'I don't know how,' 'I don't know enough,' 'I'm not smart enough,' or 'I've never been involved in politics.'… I think that's the biggest stumbling block to get over" (126). This can sometimes lead to exasperation on the part of recruiters. Describing an example of a women hesitant to run, a regular recruiter lamented, "She is an All-American Athlete, Phi Beta Kappa, Rhodes Scholar Finalist, Harvard Law Grad, and [was an] adviser to President Bush. I met with her for dinner the other night and basically begged her to run for office. She told me she doesn't think she's qualified. Who the hell is qualified if she isn't? I don't get it." (Lawless and Fox 2010, 114).

In short, there are many reasons to expect that women are empirically harder to recruit than men. Yet, in their survey of professionals, Fox and Lawless find that women who recall being recruited are just as likely as men who recall being recruited to consider running for office (2010, 322). This is an encouraging finding,

but because it is from observational data that is based on self-reported recall, we must be cautious in drawing causal inferences from it. Perhaps recruitment does help women overcome their self-doubts to the point that it erases the gap. But, it is also possible that a selection effect may be driving these results: party leaders focus on recruiting people—male or female—who are likely to respond positively to recruitment. Or, women who are already interested in running for office may be more likely to remember recruitment efforts or to perceive conversations with party or community leaders as recruitment efforts. Especially given recruiters' emphatic claims about women's hesitancy to run, figuring out whether recruitment really does close the gender gap is important.

To untangle these difficult causal questions, we need an objective measure of recruitment that does not rely on individual perceptions or recollections. If one can accurately identify recruitment attempts, it is easier to draw conclusions about how men and women react to them. Hence, in our both of our studies, we track men and women's responses to the same recruitment messages, which eliminates the challenge of whether there are systematic biases in who recalls being recruited or if there is a gendered selection effect in who gets recruited. Furthermore, our first study has the advantage of measuring real-world behavioral outcomes. Experimental or quasi-experimental field studies of recruitment are themselves very novel (Broockman 2014; Preece and Stoddard 2015a); however, we believe that field and experimental studies are important additions to the literature because they provide a more reliable way to estimate the effect of recruitment on political ambition.

Study 1: "Prospective Candidate Information Seminar" Field Study

Research Design and Hypotheses

We partnered with the Republican Party in Utah County, Utah (a conservative, primarily suburban county of a little over 500,000 residents) to invite active members to a party-sponsored candidate training seminar. We offered to partner with the Democratic Party to run a parallel seminar for their members, but they declined. While this limits the generalizability of our results, there are reasons to be particularly interested in gender and recruitment in the Republican Party. While the share of Democratic elected officials that are women has grown steadily over the last three decades, the share of Republican elected officials who are women has not. In fact, among some offices the proportion of women has actually declined since the mid-1990s (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013, pp. 66–68). And, there are aspects of Republican Party culture that may make it more difficult for women to thrive in elected office (Elder 2012). Hence, understanding the intra-party dynamics of the Republican Party that contribute to this discouraging trend is essential to understanding why women remain so underrepresented in office.

As in many parts of the United States, women are extremely underrepresented on the ballot in Utah County. Table 1 reports the gender breakdown of candidates by office in the 2011–2012 election cycle. Overall, women comprised 15.2 % of the 243 candidates for all offices for which Utah County residents were eligible; they

Table 1 Candidate gender by office

Candidates for the 2012 and 2011 state and municipal general and primary elections	Male		Female		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Local School Board	14	61	9	39	23
City Council	88	85	15	15	103
Mayor	44	90	5	10	49
State School Board	4	67	2	33	6
State Legislator	40	87	6	13	46
Statewide Office	16	100	0	0	16
Total	206	85	37	15	243

Source: The official website of Utah County Government, downloaded on 10/15/2014 from http://www.utahcounty.gov/Dept/ClerkAud/Elections/ElectRslts/index.html

comprised just 12.1 % of all non-school board candidates. In short, given Utah County's low existing levels of women's participation in public office, it is an interesting and difficult case for our research.

With the full cooperation of the party, we organized a free, party-sponsored "Prospective Candidate Information Seminar" (PCIS). We selected 11,016 Republican Party caucus attendees (5510 men and 5506 women[1]) who were also regular voters and/or current or former party officers to receive a personalized postcard invitation to the recruitment seminar. In households with multiple party members, we randomly assigned one individual to receive an invitation so that no household received more than one invitation. The invitations were addressed to a specific individual and invited him or her to the seminar.[2] The invitation explained that the seminar would cover topics such as increasing name recognition, developing a campaign message, organizing a campaign team, managing campaign logistics, and fundraising. The speakers included local politicians, a campaign strategist, and a family panel to discuss the effects of political involvement on family life. Each personalized invitation had a unique identification number[3] that allowed the invitee to log on to a gated website where he or she could get further information and to register for the seminar. This allowed us to track (1) who was interested enough to log on to the website for more information, (2) who registered

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[1] We mailed invitations to a total of 6,056 women, but a random subset of these women received a woman-specific message that men did not receive, so we limit our analysis here to the 5506 women who received identical invitations to the men. See Preece and Stoddard 2015a for the full analysis.

[2] As part of a larger field experiment, subjects were randomly assigned to receive one of 11 slightly different invitations in an attempt to see if different messages were more effective in recruiting. However, there were few statistically significant differences between the invitations with regard to who registered for or attended the event, so we have aggregated the various conditions for this paper.

[3] The ID number included portions of the subject's first and last names to emphasize that the invitation was to that specific person and discourage another household resident from using it.

for the event, and (3) who attended.[4] For each individual who registered for the seminar we also collected demographic information including age, gender, education and income level, marital status, family size, occupation, and degree of political involvement.[5]

We used a candidate training seminar as the focus of our field study on recruitment for two reasons. First, it provided a relevant, real-world setting in which we could recruit participants in an identical way. While a research design that included more personal recruitment attempts might better reflect the bulk of recruitment that happens on the ground, it would be difficult to implement in a consistent way, especially on such a large scale. Second, candidate training programs are an increasingly popular recruitment method. Typically these programs are sponsored by interest groups who aim to increase the number of candidates sympathetic to their cause.[6] However, party-sponsored seminars have become common, and there are reasons to believe that these kinds of programs will soon begin to specifically target women. In its *Growth and Opportunity Project* report following the 2012 election, the Republican National Committee urged the Party to "provide training programs for potential female candidates that include fundraising guidance, digital strategy, etc." (2013, pp. 20–21). Despite their growing prominence as a recruitment tool, academic research on these programs is scant (though see Rozell 2000; Sanbonmatsu 2015; Hennings 2011). However, we do know that female state legislators are more likely than their male counterparts to have attended a training program (Sanbonmatsu et al. 2009). We believe our research is a good example of how training programs could be used by scholars to study the recruitment process in the future.

Results

For each of the 11,016 subjects, we collected data from the party database and the state voter file on each individual's age and their level of political involvement, including their election voting frequency and their current or former party officer status. We also worked with a local marketing firm to confirm the gender and mailing addresses for each individual. We report our data on the full sample by gender in Appendix Table 1 in Electronic Supplementary Material. As reported in the table, men in our sample are on average 1.56 years younger than women and are also significantly more likely to have served as a party officer during 2006–2012 period for which we have data. The women in our sample, however, are

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[4] To monitor compliance, we carefully checked that the individuals who registered for and attended PCIS were the same individuals who the invitations were intended for. All of the registered individuals were in fact the intended recipients of the invitation, and only two of the PCIS attendees were absent from our list. They attended as guests of the registered participants and we excluded them from our statistical analysis.

[5] Appendix 3A in Electronic Supplementary Material provides a detailed discussion of our outreach efforts.

[6] Examples include the California Farm Bureau Federation's Campaign Management Seminar, the Center for Progressive Leadership's Local Progressive Candidate Trainings, the American Majority's New Leaders Campaign Training, and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund's Candidate and Campaign Training.

significantly more likely than the men to vote in both presidential and non-presidential elections.

Our main objective was to identify whether identical recruitment of men and women results in gender-balanced responses to recruitment. Though the existing research points in somewhat conflicting directions, we hypothesize that women will be less likely to respond to the party recruitment efforts than men for all of our dependent variables: logging on to the seminar website, registering for the seminar, and attending the seminar.

Indeed, we find strong evidence that men and women responded to our gender-balanced recruitment efforts in highly gendered ways. Table 2 reports large, statistically significant differences between men and women's responses for all three of our measures. Overall, about 1.4 % of men logged on to our website to find out more information compared to only 0.7 % of women. These yields are small for both men and women, reflecting the reality that interest in running for office is rare and that mobilization efforts generally have fairly small effect sizes (Cardy 2005; Gerber and Green 2000; Gerber et al. 2003; Miller and Krosnick 2004). However, the response rate for men was twice as high as the response rate for women. This pattern also holds with the other dependent variables, such as registering for and attending the seminar. We ran multivariate tests with the limited available demographic data (age and political engagement score) as controls and found that while both age and political engagement score have a statistically significant effect on our measures of political ambition, including them in our analysis does not substantially change our main results on gender. Appendix Table 2 in Electronic Supplementary Material reports the regression results with and without controls. Clearly, gender-balanced recruitment did not yield gender-balanced results.

These results suggest that more careful attention to who gets recruited is unlikely to fully close the gender gap in political ambition. However, in the context of the extreme underrepresentation of women in Utah County, the gender breakdown of our event is somewhat encouraging. Overall, 33 % of those who logged on to the website were women; 28 % of those who registered were women; and 31 % of those who attended were women. This is clearly better than the 15 % of candidates who were women in the last election cycle. If the 17 women who attended the seminar had actually run for office in the last election cycle, it would have increased the number of women on the ballot by 46 %. And if the 39 women who were interested enough in the seminar to log on to find out more information about it had run for office in the last election cycle, it would have more than doubled the number of women on the ballot.

Table 2 PCIS response rates by gender

	Male	Female
Percentage of respondents who logged into the website	1.4 % (0.002)	0.7 %[a] (0.001)
Percentage of respondents who registered for the seminar	0.9 % (0.001)	0.4 %[a] (0.001)
Percentage of respondents who attended the seminar	0.6 % (0.001)	0.3 %[a] (0.001)
Number of subjects	5510	5506

[a] Indicates statistical significance at the 5 % level, two tailed t test. Standard errors are in parentheses

Further, although the number of attendees at the seminar was small, it appears that attending the seminar disproportionately benefited the women. At the conclusion of the seminar, attendees were asked to rate what they felt was their likelihood of running for office before and after the seminar using a 1–4 point scale. On average, men increased their reported likelihood by .3 points (from 3.1 to 3.4) and women increased by .5 points (from 2.9 to 3.4). Attendees were also asked to rate what they felt was their likelihood of winning an election before and after the seminar. The men and women were roughly equally confident about the prospects for victory before the seminar (2.48 points for the men vs. 2.43 points for the women). However, the women's confidence was boosted considerably more by the seminar than the men's confidence. On average, men increased their confidence by .48 points; women increased their confidence by .86 points. In the end, the women emerged from the seminar more confident in their ability to win their first election than the men. While our sample is small and these differences are not statistically significant, they are suggestive. And, they are consistent with other research that suggests that candidate training programs are particularly important for women (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013; Rozell 2000).

This field study has the advantage of being based on behavioral outcomes from real-world recruitment efforts, but there are some obvious limitations. First, because we were not able to work with the Democratic Party, we cannot assume that the results would replicate among Democratic men and women. Second, because little demographic information is available for the full sample of subjects, we must be cautious in inferring causation from these results. Although all subjects are politically active (caucus attendees and regular voters), there are a host of unobserved variables that could account for the gender differences that we found. So, while the results of the first study are highly suggestive, we turn to a second study to provide a more methodologically rigorous examination of gendered responses to recruitment that also accounts for political party and other demographics.

Study 2: Exit Poll Survey Experiment

Experimental Design and Subject Pool

In this section we report the results of an experiment that we conducted as part of the 2014 Utah Colleges Exit Poll. The survey consisted of traditional questions found on an exit survey, including candidate choice, important issues, demographics, and voting accessibility.[7] Our experiment was embedded after the traditional exit poll questions and before questions about demographics.[8] Exit poll respondents

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[7] See Appendix 3B in Electronic Supplementary Material for a detailed discussion of the design and sampling of the exit poll. See also http://exitpoll.byu.edu/.

[8] Embedded in the survey itself were three different experiments. To ensure that each subject was exposed to a treatment, a Latin Square design was put in place that ensured each subject received one control and two treatment messages. Further, our experiment was the first of the three, so our results should be unaffected by the other treatments.

were randomly assigned into either a control or a treatment condition. The control condition asked respondents "Would you ever consider running for local office?" Respondents could answer yes, probably yes, probably not, or no. The treatment language asked if subjects would ever consider running for local office "if a party or community leader encouraged them to do so"[9] and had the same answer options as in the control condition.

Data and Results

Our sample consists of 3960 survey respondents, 1946 in the control and 2014 in the treatment. Details about the demographics of the sample are available in Appendix Table 3 in Electronic Supplementary Material, which also reports demographics by treatment. Overall, the differences in the preexisting characteristics between the subjects in the two treatments are not statistically significant, suggesting that the randomization of treatments was effective.[10]

Table 3 reports the breakdown of responses to the exit poll question regarding considering running for office by gender and treatment. In the control condition, 30.2 % of the men responded "yes" or "probably yes"; the women were about half as likely to respond positively, with only 14.4 % responding "yes" or "probably yes." Fully 57.3 % of the women completely ruled out running for office ("no"). The men's average interest in the control group is 2.07 (out of 4), while the women's average interest in the control is 1.63.[11] So, consistent with our field study results and many other researchers' findings, we find a significant gender gap in political ambition.

How do men and women in the recruitment treatment group respond? 38.9 % of the men and 18.1 % of the women respond "yes" or "probably yes." In other words, the gender gap remains very wide—women are still less than half as likely to respond positively. In fact, Table 3 provides evidence that the recruitment treatment actually increases the magnitude of the gender gap observed in the control. In the control condition, women are 18 percentage points more likely than men to say they would not consider running for office ("no"). In the recruitment condition, this gap increases to 25 percentage points. Looking at the scale, the treatment condition raises men's average response on the 4-point scale to 2.28 (a 10 % increase over the control) while leaving the women's average response unaffected at 1.70.

Our difference-in-difference analyses show that this increase in the gender gap as a result of the recruitment treatment happens in all four response categories, but it only reaches conventional levels of statistical significance among those who completely rule out running for office ("no"). Among this latter group, the gender

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[9] See Appendix 4 in Electronic Supplementary Material for the full survey text.

[10] In Appendix Table 3 in Electronic Supplementary Material, we report the breakdown of summary statistics by treatment and gender. The table shows that there are no statistically significant differences in control and treatment groups within each gender, with the exception of incomes between $100,000 and $125,000 for men and greater than $150,000 for women. We control for these differences in our robustness tests below.

[11] Subjects' responses were coded as 1, 2, 3, or 4, with the numbers corresponding to "No", "Probably not", "Probably yes", and "Yes" respectively.

Table 3 Gender differences in political ambition by treatment, Exit Poll experiment

Response	Control			Treatment			Difference-in-difference
	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference	
Yes	.161 [.37]	.061 [.24]	−.100[a] (.02)	.190 [.39]	.072 [.26]	−.118[a] (.01)	−.017 (.02)
Probably yes	.141 [.35]	.083 [.28]	−.058[a] (.02)	.199 [.40]	.109 [.31]	−.089[a] (.02)	−.031 (.02)
Probably no	.306 [.46]	.283 [.45]	−.023 (.02)	.311 [.46]	.266 [.44]	−.045[a] (.02)	−.021 (.03)
No mean	.391 [.49]	.573 [.49]	.182[a] (.02)	.301 [.46]	.553 [.50]	.252[a] (.02)	.070[a] (.03) .13*
response	2.07 [1.08]	1.63 [.87]	.44[a] (.04)	2.28 [1.09]	1.70 [.93]	.58[a] (.05)	(.07)
N	992	954	–	1017	997	–	–

Standard errors are in parentheses. Standard deviations are in brackets

[a] Indicates statistical significance at the 5 % level

[b] Indicates statistical significance at the 10 % level

gap increases by seven percentage points in the recruitment treatment group. In other words, recruitment is much more likely to move men out of the "no" category than to move women out of the "no" category; however, because the men who move out of the "no" category are distributed fairly evenly across the other responses, the other difference-in-difference calculations show smaller treatment effects for those dependent variables.

Next, we test whether our treatment effect is robust to the inclusion of additional covariates. Because it is possible that men and women have different backgrounds and qualifications that might influence their propensity to respond to recruitment, this is an important consideration. To test the effect of recruitment on individuals' political ambition, we performed the following regressions analysis:

$$PA_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \, x \, Treatment_i + \beta_2 \, x \, Female_i + \beta_3 \, x \, Treatment_i \, x \, Female_i + \beta_4 X_i + \varepsilon_i \tag{1}$$

In this equation, PA_i represents the main measure of political ambition in individual i's self-reported average propensity to consider running for a political

Table 4 Probit regression results by party affiliation (DV: mean response)

	Full sample	Republicans	Democrats
Treatment	.228[a] (.05)	.229[b] (.07)	.276[a] (.11)
Female	−.524[b] (.06)	−.527[b] (.07)	−.382[b] (.11)
Treatment × female	−.151[a] (.07)	−.194[a] (.10)	−.125 (.15)
Demographics			
Age	−.015[b] (.00)	−.012[b] (.00)	−.019[b] (.00)
Black	.210 (.23)	.200 (.35)	.354 (.32)
Hispanic	.111 (.11)	.129 (.19)	.151 (.17)
Married	.182[b] (.07)	.123 (.10)	.049 (.12)
College degree	.209[b] (.06)	.189[a] (.08)	.129 (.12)
Postgraduate education	.336[b] (.07)	.426[b] (.09)	−.248[a] (.12)
Unemployed	.038 (.13)	.005 (.19)	−.019 (.31)
Retired	−.172[a] (.07)	−.246[a] (.09)	−.274[a] (.13)
Student	.007 (.12)	.095 (.16)	−.231 (.22)
Income < $40,000	−.023 (.12)	.044 (.16)	−.042 (.21)
Income > $100,000	.136 (.11)	.224 (.16)	.219 (.21)
Democrat	−.251[b] (.06)	–	–
Democrat × female	.156[c] (.09)	–	–
Pseudo R2 from Probit model	.0603		
Observations	3774	2089	1031

Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Demographic variables include age; race/ethnicity; marital status; educational attainment; employment status; and income. Reported results are those of the ordered probit model

[a,b,c] Indicate statistical significance at the 5, 1, and 10 % level, respectively

office: a discrete variable between 1 and 4.[12] *Treatment* is a dummy variable for our recruitment treatment, *Female* is a dummy variable for female gender, and X_i is a vector of demographic characteristics and other covariates for each individual i. We included the following demographic information on the subjects: age, gender, education level, employment, income, and political party affiliation.

Since our model includes an interaction term between gender and treatment, we expect that the unique effect of recruitment on men (β_1) should be positive. Our model also allows us to test the effect of the treatment on the gender gap. We define the gender gap as the difference in the average levels of interest of men and women. Given the prior theoretical literature discussed above, we expect that the gender gap in the treatment will be larger than in the control. Since the gender gap in the treatment is given by ($\beta_2 + \beta_3$) and the gender gap in the control is given by β_2, we expect that $\beta_3 < 0$.

We report the results of our probit regression analysis in Table 4 for three separate specifications. Column 1 of the table corresponds to the full sample, while columns 2 and 3 report the results of the analysis performed for the Republican and Democratic voters separately. These results confirm a statistically significant effect of the treatment variable, as well as the interaction term between treatment and gender. The coefficients do not change substantially with the inclusion of covariates, suggesting that factors like education and employment do not seem to be responsible for the gendered responses to recruitment. As reported in Table 4, the recruitment treatment has a positive and statistically significant effect on men's political ambition. We also observe that the recruitment treatment significantly increases the gender gap in the average willingness to consider a political office, as β_3 is negative and statistically significant.

Table 4 also reveals notable partisan patterns in responses to recruitment. While our first study was unable to address the question of how Democratic men and women respond to recruitment, about a third of our exit poll respondents identify as Democratic partisans or "leaners." Column 1 shows that, overall, Democratic respondents were less politically ambitious than Republican respondents. This is not surprising, given that Utah is heavily Republican, so Democratic candidates are unlikely to be successful outside certain left-leaning parts of the state. However, Democratic women are more politically ambitious than the excluded category, Republican women.

Columns 2 and 3 report the experimental results by party. For both sets of partisans, the recruitment treatment increased political ambition—perhaps even slightly more for Democrats than Republicans. The coefficients for "Female" indicate that there is a significant baseline gap between male and female political ambition in both parties, though it is smaller among Democrats than among Republicans. Further, among Republicans the treatment widens the gender gap in political ambition; the treatment × female coefficient is negative and statistically significant for Republicans. While the treatment × female coefficient is negative

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[12] We also performed our analysis with two additional measures of political ambition: individual i's probability of responding "yes"; 2) individual i's probability of responding positively (either "yes" or "probably yes"). The results of these analyses are reported in Appendix Table 4 in Electronic Supplementary Material.

for Democrats, the standard error is too high to be confident about the true direction of the relationship. It is difficult to know if this is because of the sample size (there were half as many Democrats as Republicans), experimental location (a heavily Republican state), or genuine null results. More research will help to clarify this.

But, our results suggest that while the Democratic Party still faces a gender gap in political ambition among its supporters, more equitable recruitment practices are probably less likely to exacerbate this gap than in the Republican Party. The challenges are more severe among Republicans. Not only is there a larger baseline gender gap in political ambition, but Republican men are much more responsive to recruitment efforts than Republican women. Hence, perfectly gender equitable recruitment practices could actually hurt women's descriptive representation in the Republican Party vis-à-vis no recruitment at all.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of our studies have important implications for research on gender and political representation. In two different studies with different outcome measures, Republican men were significantly more likely than Republican women to respond positively to elite recruitment. Methodologically, these studies complement each other well—the first measures behavioral responses to carefully designed real life recruitment efforts, while the second provides the kind of causal inference that only an experiment can deliver. That both of these studies point in the same direction suggests that gendered responses to party recruitment are an important factor in the underrepresentation of women, especially Republican women, in political office.

The findings are somewhat different for Democrats. While Democratic men are more politically ambitious than Democratic women, the men do not seem to be significantly more responsive to recruitment than women. So, Democratic Party leaders may be able to enact equitable recruitment practices without them backfiring. In contrast, Republican elites need to be aware that male and female responses to recruitment are such that fully gender equitable recruitment practices will not just reproduce baseline gender differences in political ambition—they may actually produce worse results that no recruitment at all. Of course, since current recruitment practices are highly skewed toward recruiting men, more equitable recruitment may still be an improvement over the status quo. But the practical implication from this research is that if parties, especially the Republican Party, are interested in increasing the number of women on the ballot, they need to develop recruitment practices that specifically target women. "Gender blind" recruitment will not solve the problem.

These findings also have theoretical implications. Existing research has identified gendered recruitment practices as a reason for women's underrepresentation. And, no doubt the gendered nature of political networks and recruitment practices matters a great deal. Our findings show that men do respond positively to recruitment, so the current practice of disproportionately recruiting them likely contributes to large gender gaps on the ballot. But, we find that even deliberately gender-balanced recruitment efforts can produce highly gendered results. Hence, an academic focus

on cataloging and examining the efforts that party elites make to encourage people to run is only half of the equation. If we wish to truly understand the role recruitment plays in who ends up on the ballot, we must not only consider what recruitment messages party officials send, but also how individuals *interpret* and *internalize* these recruitment messages when they receive them. Recruitment is an interactive process, so the behavior of both the recruiters and recruits matters.

All of this raises a number of questions. When a political elite suggests to a politically engaged citizen that he or she should consider running for office, what does that citizen hear? A platitude? A genuine request? A promise of support? We find partisan differences in recruitment responses, so are there aspects of party culture or structure that are responsible for this (Elder 2012)? Or are Republican and Democratic activists, especially female activists, fundamentally different in ways that make Republican women harder to recruit? The limitations of our research designs make it impossible to understand exactly why we find a gender gap in responses to recruitment. But, further research that probes the perceptions of men and women who are recruited is important because we find that effective recruitment depends a great deal on how recruits experience and respond to the recruitment effort.

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