

Gender, Advice, and the Candidacy Gap in American Politics

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Abstract

American women remain vastly under-represented in positions of political power, and researchers have argued that this representational deficit is partially due to a political candidacy gap. In this article, we investigate the importance of gender identity at a formative moment in the development of political ambition. More specifically, we contacted thousands of local party leaders, donors, and activists to solicit advice for one of two student clubs: one women's group and one gender-non-specific group. Our experiment suggests that overt gender identity can lead to greater guidance opportunities -- particularly from Republican women. Moreover, while the advice offered to the women's club was far more likely to be gendered, the advice given to this group did *not* include a greater emphasis on the challenges associated with a political career. These findings suggest that organizational gender identity can meaningfully affect political mentorship experiences and, ultimately, the candidate pipeline.¹

¹This research was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Lafayette College on May 12, 2021 (Proposal Number: AY2021-52). Our pre-analysis plan ([AsPredicted #75677](#)) was registered just before our recruitment email was distributed, on September 28, 2021. Replication data will be made available on the Harvard Dataverse.

Introduction

American women are still dramatically underrepresented in positions of political power. According to the Center for American Women and Politics, women make up just 24% of the U.S. Senate, 28% of the House of Representatives, and around 30% of state and local offices; the vast majority of lawmakers – around 85% – are men in some state legislatures (CAWP 2022). Over a century after the ratification of the 19th Amendment, women are still less likely to hold positions of policymaking authority than men at every level of the American government.

There are, however, some indicators that the gender gap in political representation appears to be narrowing. Today, the U.S. Senate and House have record high numbers of women holding elected positions in those chambers, and the nine women serving as governors across the nation similarly mark a new record (CAWP 2022). The United States has had women elected as Speaker of the House (Nancy Pelosi), Vice President (Kamala Harris), and a major party nominee for the President of the United States (Hillary Clinton). Recent special elections and primary nominating competitions make it very likely that every state will have elected at least one woman to represent them in Congress by the end of 2022. Moreover, many elected women on the right and left have become routine household names (e.g., Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez).

Despite these shifts, men continue to make up the vast majority of political candidates. Approximately two out of every three candidates on a U.S. ballot will be a man in the 2022 general elections (CAWP 2022), and, for this reason, progress towards greater gender parity in elected positions of power is likely to stall if nothing changes in the candidate recruitment pipeline. Women are less likely to consider a run for office, less likely to be encouraged to run for office, and less likely to consider themselves as qualified candidates

for office. These patterns have persisted for decades across demographic groups (race, age, income, geography, family circumstances, and partisan affiliation) (Lawless and Fox 2022a, 2022b). The persistent “political ambition gap” in American politics is thus a major barrier to the election of more women in public office.

In this article, we consider the role that political mentorship and advice might play in building a more inclusive and representative democracy. More specifically, we run an experiment to evaluate if members of a college women’s group are more likely to receive advice and if the nature of that advice differs from gender-non-specific groups. We test these claims using a new survey of thousands of local party leaders, political donors, and activists from every American state.

The paper proceeds in the following manner. First, we briefly review existing research on the political “ambition gap” in American politics as a means of understanding how – if at all – political mentorship may help to build a more representative democracy. Next, we describe the benefits and limitations of our novel survey: the American Political Leadership Survey. From there, we proceed to provide the details of our experimental design and results.. We conclude with a discussion of future research opportunities in the study of the “ambition gap” and political mentorship.

Mentorship and the Gender Gap in Political Candidacy

We argue that mentorship can play a vital role in the development of early-stage political careers. While there is relatively little research on gendered political *advice*, we are not the first researchers to consider this question. For example, Kalla, Rosenbluth, and Teele (2020) conducted an audit experiment of city, county, and state government officials, and found some evidence that officials were more eager to offer lengthy responses and offers to help women considering a political future. We build upon these findings in a new study of

political advising and the candidate pipeline. In this section, we review the existing research on the gender gap in political candidacy to better understand how – if at all – advice and mentorship can reduce the deficit of women running for office.

Self-Perceptions and the Decision to Run for Office

There are many plausible reasons for the gender gap in elected office, but recent research has consistently emphasized the importance of candidate self-perception. Women often underestimate their odds of winning a campaign, even though there is little demonstrated difference in how men and women perform in elections (Brooks 2013; Dolan 2014; Kanthak and Woon 2015; Hayes and Lawless 2016; Saha and Weeks 2020). This constructed belief that they are less qualified to run can act as a significant deterrent to pursuing politics; in part, researchers argue that women (mistakenly) view their abilities as below that of men in the same position (Fox and Lawless 2010; Preece 2016). Research in this area is careful to articulate the possibility of candidate quality selection and other countervailing effects, but, by and large, women that run for office do not appear to receive fewer votes on account of their gender.

In light of this, researchers have turned to consider the relatively low levels of political ambition among women, and the *candidate* gender gap in U.S. politics. Historically, American politics has been framed as a masculine career that rewards those with stereotypically masculine traits (Sweet-Cushman 2016). Through socialization that prioritizes stereotypically feminine traits, women may view themselves as somehow apart from politics, which further reduces the likelihood of running for office (Fox and Lawless 2014). Surprisingly, this trend does not seem to be unique to older generations of would-be candidates. As Lawless (2015) summarizes:

Regardless of party, profession, income, or region, female potential candidates are less likely than men to consider running for office, less likely to take the steps that typically precede a campaign, less likely to throw their hats into the ring, and less likely to receive encouragement to do so. There has been no progress in the last decade, and the gender gap in political ambition among college students is as big as it is among professionally established adults (p. 361).

The presence of a widespread gap in ambition among women is thus a persistent issue in American political representation. As Shames (2017) shows, women are far less likely to strongly consider running for office – even if they view themselves as ambitious in other contexts.² However, those that directly acknowledge this barrier to entry may find a meaningful path toward increasing the number of women willing to consider a bid for office. Women may be able to improve their self-perception in this context – and ultimately increase their likelihood of running – if they are given support, encouragement, and guidance from a relevant outside source.

Sources of Political Advice in the Candidate Pipeline

There are, of course, many sources of advice and support for would-be candidates. Candidates naturally turn to family, friends, and co-workers to gauge their reaction to an interest in running for office. Without a doubt, these intimates are significant because they can offer their thoughts with deep knowledge about the would-be candidate's personality and qualifications. Beyond this group, however, we argue that local political parties and the activists that contribute to their causes stand out as individuals with highly relevant experience, resources, and influence.

From our perspective, local Democratic and Republican Party leaders can have an immense impact on a political novice's opportunities to build the resources necessary for a

² We do not explore intersectional gender gaps in this paper, but it's worth noting Shames (2017) finds that non-white women were considerably less likely to consider a bid for public office when compared to men in their race/ethnic group. At the same time women in these categories had *higher* self-expressed levels of ambition.

successful campaign. Often local leaders act as gatekeepers to political recruitment, which can be advantageous to women if their leaders are in support of gender parity (Doherty, Dowling, and Miller 2019). Local politics is often the first step for many interested in pursuing elected office, so if local leaders are openly supportive of women, they may be more likely to consider candidacy as a viable option. In the United States, at least, local parties are not necessarily constrained by the wants of the state or federal parties (Broockman et. al 2021). Municipal and county party leaders are free to create a more (or less) welcoming environment to women, such that these candidates feel more (or less) supported than they would pursuing a higher office. Anecdotally, there seems to be an increased number of women running and winning from both parties in recent election cycles. After the 2020 election, for example, 94 women assumed statewide executive office and 114 women joined the 117th Congress. These trends toward greater gender parity are in part due to the Republican and Democratic Parties strategically shifting their support to a greater number of women, and as prior research shows, party support plays a significant role in the representation of women in office (Dolan 2010).

Like party leaders, political donors can play a key role in recruiting and supporting women interested in public office. The creation of women-centered PACS (such as EMILY's List, the WISH List, and the Susan B. Anthony List) amassed financial support from donors to provide monetary support for the candidacy of other women (Day and Hadley 2002). Each of these three PACs has a different agenda that is tailored to specific types of candidates and specific parties, which can help select a variety of women for office. From an individual donor's perspective, they have the opportunity to mold future candidates by "investing" in people who align with their values. To state the obvious, donors eager to increase gender parity are well-positioned to use their money towards both candidate recruitment and campaign support initiatives.

On this point, researchers have documented an increased consciousness of the gender disparity in politics (Karpowitz et al 2017; Thomsen and Swers 2017; Grumbach, et. al 2020) and considerable efforts made to close the gender gap (Day and Hadley 2002; Geras 2020). Given these trends, we argue that party leaders and activists will be more likely to offer advice and encouragement to a group of women considering political careers relative to a group without any explicit gender identity. As both parties actively attempt to increase the representation of women in public office, we expect greater support for a group of young women as they explore their own political ambitions.

Hypothesis 1: *Party leaders and activists will be more willing to offer advice to a group composed solely of young women interested in politics, compared to a group that is not gender-specific.*

Today both parties view the need for greater gender parity in public office as a priority. Thomsen (2015) provides evidence that ideological fit within one's party can meaningfully shape incentives to run for elected office, and the distribution of women within a party's ideological spectrum can entrench gender imbalances. Republican women, traditionally to the left of their male counterparts, have been considerably underrepresented in the congressional candidate pipeline. Democrats have, historically, elected more women to public office, but the Republican Party's recruiting infrastructure has become more welcoming for women in recent years. In part, this is due to efforts by Republican women in Congress to expand the number of women representing the GOP on ballots (Zhou 2020).

Research suggests that deliberate attempts to recruit more Republican women to run for office can, in fact, be effective. Karpowitz, et. al (2017) found that when Republican precinct leaders encouraged their constituents to consider voting for a woman, the number of precincts with elected women increased. Simple encouragement, at least at the local level,

can be a useful tactic for increasing gender parity within the party. Elected officials in higher levels of government have also helped ease the worries of Republican women.

Democrats maintain a slightly stronger record in electing women to local office, perhaps because women are more likely to run as Democrats in those races (Crowder-Meyer 2009). While this finding does not mean the Democratic Party is always more supportive of women, Democrats may have more experience seeking out such mentoring and advising opportunities. The majority of women elected to state and federal office are, in fact, Democrats, and a party that has experienced considerable success with women as standard bearers may be more likely to seek out such mentoring opportunities (CAWP).

In sum, more women identify with the Democratic Party than the Republican Party, the Democratic Party has successfully elected more women to positions of political power, and party leaders are more likely to support candidates similar to themselves (Broockman 2014; Butler and Preece 2016). Consistent with prior research (Crowder-Meyer 2009; Crowder-Meyer 2011), we argue that Democratic women are particularly well-positioned and more likely to offer advice to young women interested in political careers.

Hypothesis 2: *The effect of a group's gender identity on willingness to offer advice will be greater among Democratic women.*

We have argued that receiving advice from party leaders and activists can plausibly affect the candidate pipeline at a very early stage, but the *substance* of that advice must matter at least as much as the propensity to offer it in the first place. For example, we might wonder if women's organizations receive gendered advice (i.e., advice specific to women interested in politics), and if that advice highlights *misperceptions* about gender-specific obstacles to electoral success. Here we explore two predictions.

First, we argue that the heightened awareness of the gender gap in political representation will lead party leaders and activists to directly address a would-be candidate's

gender identity if they are a member of a women's organization. For example, party leaders and activists may address their desire to elect more women into positions of influence and the need to have women's voices heard in the policymaking process. Alternatively, they might suggest helpful resources and supportive organizations focused on electing women as a means of encouraging a serious bid for office. Women's groups, we argue, will receive gendered advice, and we believe this hypothesis is particularly worth exploring if gendered advice carries important consequences for a potential candidate's self-perception and ambition.

Hypothesis 3: *Advice offered to a women's organization will be more likely to reference gender.*

We further explore whether women receive advice that highlights the many likely challenges associated with running a political campaign. This, we argue, is particularly relevant as a disproportionate emphasis on challenges may actually reinforce problems of self-perception among would-be candidates. By contrast, more optimistic advice (i.e., advice that does not emphasize barriers to entry) may help to counteract factors that contribute to the gender gap in political candidacy.

Hypothesis 4: *Advice offered to a women's organization will include more references to challenges faced in political careers.*

In sum, we set out to understand the effect of gender identity on both the propensity to offer political advice and the nature of advice rendered. We are interested in understanding these patterns, in part, because we believe that relatively low levels of ambition and self-perception barriers may be alleviated with appropriate guidance and encouragement. Political mentorship and the candidate gender gap is a broad and meaningful avenue for future research, and we hope this analysis of political advice from

influential political elites can advance our understanding of American political representation.

The American Political Leadership Survey

To test these claims, we set out to design an experiment that evaluates changes in mentorship behavior in response to gender identity. Our population of interest, however, must include individuals in a position to offer meaningful guidance to those considering a political career. As previously discussed, we argue that local party leaders, political donors, and party activists offer both information and other resources necessary to improve the probability of early success in the political profession. Unfortunately, common convenience samples and extremely expensive probability samples of the full US population would present a problem of external validity for our design. After all, we are particularly interested in the advice provided by political elites in a position to mentor would-be candidates; these individuals are outliers, at a minimum, in their level of political engagement.

To address these concerns, we fielded a new survey, which we titled the “American Political Leadership Survey.” We set out to recruit our sample by creating a custom list of 43,651 potential survey respondents from throughout the United States. Unlike convenience samples, we offered no financial incentives to potential respondents, and our respondents do not, to our knowledge, have extensive experience completing political science surveys for monetary compensation. Instead, individuals in our sample were asked to complete our survey as a means of informing students at the authors’ home institution. We argue that this recruitment approach closely mirrors the incentives that individuals might face at the moment they are considering the early stages of their political career.³ While we expected

³ In other words, it is unlikely that young women genuinely interested in gaining some advice from their local party organizations would lead with an offer to be entered into a lottery for a \$25 Amazon gift card.

extraordinarily low response rates (far lower than 10%), we accepted this risk as a reasonable cost of improving the external validity of other key attributes in our sample (e.g., experience as a party leader).

It is also worth noting that this project was executed in coordination with real college students from the authors' home institution. Student researchers participated in the design of the study and the sample collection. Moreover, the authors did, in fact, share the resulting advice with the two key student organizations on which the experimental treatment conditions were based. So, we did not engage in any willful deception when we requested advice from real-world local party leaders, party activists, and donors on behalf of college students.

Compiling a list of 43,651 potential respondents was a considerably difficult task, but we were able to succeed in building such a large email list by combining several (externally valid) sub-populations.

First, we invited several thousand verified political donors. Political donations are vital to any professional campaign, and recent research has shown meaningful gender affinity effects that vary by party (Thomsen and Swers 2017). Despite a wealth of public information on political donors disclosed by the Federal Election Committee (FEC), legal restrictions typically preclude individuals from using those lists to populate survey experiments.⁴ We were, however, able to secure an extensive progressive donor email addresses, which were purchased from CallTimeAI. More specifically, the authors contracted with CallTimeAI to provide a *random sample* of their list of Democratic political donors. The vast majority of our

⁴ For examples of impermissible use of FEC data, please see the list of advisory opinions (AO) on their website: <https://www.fec.gov/updates/sale-or-use-contributor-information/>

contact list was thus a verified and representative sample of donors used by real-world, progressive campaigns.⁵

We next set out to include a list of local party leaders from both parties and every county in the United States. To collect these lists, we managed a large group of undergraduate research assistants over the 2020 summer to hand-code the contact information from a vast number of county partisan organizations in the United States. In total, we collected a list of 5,678 Democratic Party leaders and 4,239 Republican Party leaders. As Doherty, Dowling, and Miller (2022) show, these individuals play a vital role in candidate recruitment and the distribution of influence through political communities in every corner of the United States.

Finally, we hand-coded an additional list of party activists that we believed would have a particularly valuable set of insights for our students. The National Federation of Republican Women (NFRW) has a long history of recruiting and supporting women as candidates (Burrell 2006). The group was founded in 1938 and was once an affiliate of the Republican National Committee; today, the NFRW is a sprawling, independent, decentralized activist organization with close ties to local Republican politics throughout the nation.⁶ The National Federation of Democratic Women (NFDW) was formed several decades later to facilitate more coordinated participation among Democratic women nationwide and prepare women for positions within the Democratic National Committee.⁷ In contrast to their Republican counterparts, the NFDW remains formally affiliated with the Democratic National Committee. In total, we collected contact information on 556 members of the NFDW and 1,738

⁵ CallTimeAI donors made up 31,440 contacts in our potential sample list. We were unable to locate a comparable list of Republican donors, which significantly affected the partisan balance of our sample.

⁶ See <https://www.nfrw.org/history> for more details on the NFRW.

⁷ See <https://www.nfdw.com/history> for more details on the NFDW.

members of the NFRW. These women included members from both statewide and local chapters within each group's extensive federated organizations.

Taken together, we emailed tens of thousands of party leaders, donors, and political activists in Fall 2021 with an invitation to complete a Qualtrics survey. Each potential respondent was invited to participate in the non-partisan American Political Leadership Survey. The survey had the stated goal of learning from "local political leaders, political donors, and other prominent members of the two major parties." We include a sample of our email inviting potential respondents in the online appendix.

Our recruitment efforts yielded a total of 1,154 survey respondents. Our response rate, as expected, was extremely low (2.64%). Democratic leaders were, by far, the most responsive to our request for assistance with the study. Table 1 below shows the response rate for each respective sub-sample. It is worth remembering that no respondents were provided with any possibility of financial incentives. Each respondent was a stranger to the authors and completed the study after receiving an email without any other introduction. As previously mentioned, we were willing to accept the possibility of such low response rates to guarantee that each respondent in the survey was a verified member of the political populations of interest to this study.

The approach taken in this study is similar to Doherty, Dowling, and Miller (2022).⁸ In *Small Power*, these authors provide a comprehensive overview of local party leaders throughout the United States. They present a series of conjoint experiments through an online survey that precedes, but closely resembles, our own approach. The two studies include roughly similar numbers of party leaders, but Doherty, Dowling, and Miller (2022) had much higher response rates (20%), a more comprehensive demographic analysis of

⁸ Their survey work was fielded several years before our own, but the book was not published until the year following our own survey work.

committee chairs, and rich qualitative data from semi-structured interviews. By contrast, our experimental design focused on the solicitation of advice to be offered to real groups of college students, and we set out to include a more varied range of individuals in a position to offer support should a student wish to run for office (e.g., activists in two women's organizations and recruits from a random sample of verified progressive donors).

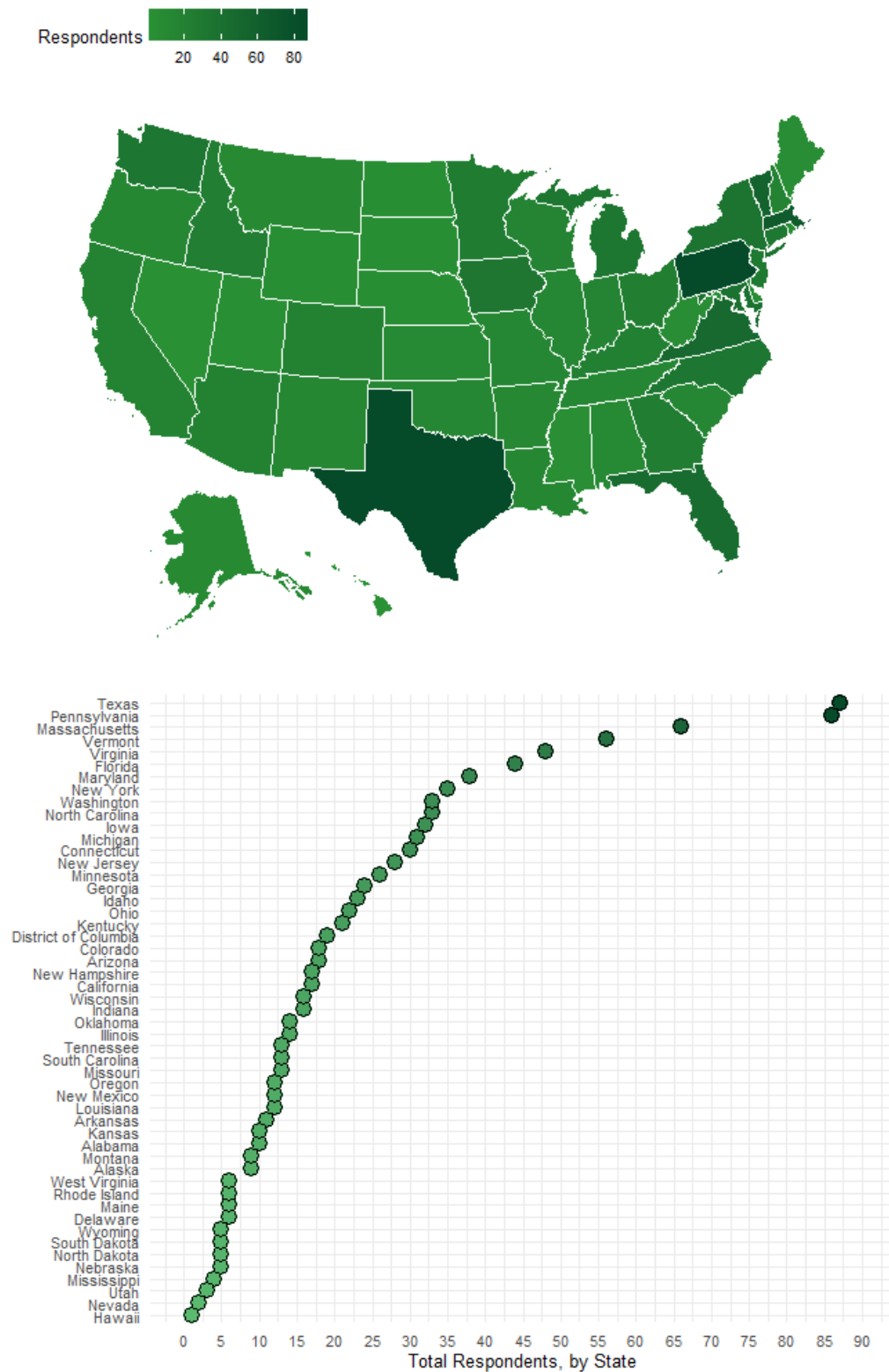
Table 1. The American Political Leadership Survey Sub-Samples and Response Rates

	Invited	Accepted Invitation	Response Rate
Democratic Party Leaders	5,678	513	9.03%
Republican Party Leaders	4,239	206	4.86%
National Federation of Democratic Women	556	40	7.19%
National Federation of Republican Women	1,738	67	3.86%
Verified Democratic Donors	31,440	328	1.04%
Total	43,651	1,154	2.64%

As expected, our sample was extraordinarily engaged in the political process over the last two years. Over 95% of our respondents indicated that they had voted, and about 92% of our sample had donated money to a candidate, campaign, or political organization. Nearly 77% of our respondents had volunteered or worked on a campaign, 83% had put up a political sign (e.g., lawn sign, bumper sticker), and 79% of the sample had attended a local political meeting (such as a school board or city council meeting). In short, our sample is not like the broader American population – or like a convenience sample – which was precisely our goal when we set out to collect our set of respondents.

While our low response rates surely impacts other aspects of external validity, we were able to successfully recruit respondents from all 50 states and Washington, D.C. Texas and Pennsylvania were the most heavily represented states in our sample, while Hawaii had the fewest respondents of any state or territory. Figure 1, below, shows the geographic distribution of our sample.

Figure 1. Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents



Approximately 52% of our sample identified as men, 47% identified as women, and around 1% indicated “some other way.” Our sample was also overwhelmingly white, with

around 87% of respondents identifying as white in a demographic question at the end of the survey. Our sample was also highly educated, with around 86% of respondents in possession of a college degree; in fact, the most common educational attainment level was a postgraduate degree.

While our sample includes both Republican and Democratic political elites, the sample clearly skews towards the Democratic side of the aisle. We had 881 Democrats take the survey (76% of our sample) and 273 (24%) Republicans. It is worth noting that we use an ex-ante measure of partisan identification by pre-coding the values for this variable based on their relevant sub-sample. This was done by simultaneously sending identical surveys separately to each of the five sub-samples,⁹ creating an indicator variable for their partisanship within each set of results, and then combining all sub-samples into a full sample for our analysis. Coding an ex-ante measure of partisanship allows us to avoid both unintended pre-treatment priming effects that might occur if we ask a partisanship question at the start of the survey and post-treatment bias if we rely upon data collected at the end of the survey (Montgomery, Nyhan, and Torres 2018; Schiff, Montagnes, and Peskowitz 2022).

Experimental Design

We cannot – practically and ethically – randomly assign an individual’s gender as a means of understanding how identifying as a woman would affect the nature and likelihood of advice and mentorship. Consequently, we designed an experiment that evaluates whether or not membership in a women’s student organization affects mentorship behavior among political elites. We describe the details of the experimental design below, but as a guiding

⁹ Democratic donors, local Democratic Party leaders, local Republican Party leaders, members of the National Federation of Democratic Women, and members of the National Federation of Republican Women

principle, we set out to minimize any possible deception and retain real-world authenticity whenever possible.

Respondents of our survey were uniformly told that their advice was “especially valuable to our most politically ambitious students” on campus and that one group, in particular, hoped to receive some professional advice (see Appendix 1, Figures A2-A3). Those individuals randomly assigned to our control group were told that the group was the “Government and Law Society”. By contrast, our treatment group respondents were informed the group was the “Women in Government and Law Society.” These two groups mirror two real, active student organizations at our home institution, but the names were very slightly altered so that the treatment varied only the group’s explicit gender identity.¹⁰ While the names of both student clubs emphasize an interest in the legal profession to hew closely to the authentic student organizations, we argue that these names also speak to the importance of broader professional patterns and candidate pipeline constraints within the two major parties (Thomsen and King 2020).

Random assignment of the gender identity allows us to make a fair comparison between two student organizations that are identical in every other observable or unobservable way. In the real world, the two groups on which these organizations were based might vary in their name, logo, membership, ideological disposition, geographic distribution, prior political engagement, or a number of other factors. Random assignment ensures that all confounding factors are just as likely to appear in the control and treatment conditions; put differently, we can be sure that differential responses to our two organizations can be

¹⁰ The real student organizations were the [institution redacted] Government and Law Society and [institution redacted] Women in Law. Alterations to the real names were made with the (enthusiastic) consent of each student organization.

attributed to the gender identity of the organization rather than other systemic or idiosyncratic factors.

Next, respondents were given additional information about the student organization: the [Women in] Government and Law Society. To maintain an authentic treatment condition, the authors requested that real students in the real student organizations create logos for both experimental versions of the student organizations. Respondents viewed this logo and a very brief description of the group's aims. In short, the group is described as a non-partisan organization interested in legal and political professions. Respondents are further informed that "many of these students are seriously considering a future run for elected office." Throughout the survey, only the name of the organization – i.e., the inclusion of "Women in" – changed across treatment conditions.

After receiving this information, respondents were asked if they would be "willing to provide professional advice to the [Women in] Government and Law Society." Each respondent could choose one of five response options: "Definitely yes," "Probably yes," "Might or might not," "Probably not," or "Definitely not." We code our primary dependent variable – willingness to advise – as any respondent that selected "Definitely yes" or "Probably yes" in response to this question.

We also wanted to provide party leaders, donors, and activists with an opportunity to offer unconstrained advice in the context of our survey. Consequently, any respondent that selected "Might or might not", "Probably yes", or "Definitely yes" was able to share their advice with students in the [Women in] Government and Law Society via an open-ended text box. Respondents that expressed an unwillingness to offer advice (i.e., "Probably not" or "Definitely not") were directed to the next closed-form question.¹¹

¹¹ We include "might or might not" in our pre-analysis plan (and subsequent analysis) because we believed this would allow us to capture a tentative openness to support. As we show later, the disaggregated results indicate strong support is the driving force behind our findings.

Finally, respondents were informed that the [Women in] Government and Law Society was “thinking about organizing a virtual, invitation-only event on the subject of political mentorship and American politics.” They were then asked if they would consider participating in this online event if it worked with their schedule. At the end of the survey, respondents were encouraged to email us directly if they were certain they would like to be involved.

In the next section, we evaluate both the willingness to offer advice and the nature of the advice given to a women’s student organization. We expected that party leaders, donors, and activists would be more enthusiastic about helping young women interested in running for elected office. We further anticipated that this effect will be even stronger among Democratic women in our sample. Finally, we expected that all respondents in our treatment condition will be more likely to offer explicitly gendered and challenge-focused advice.

Results

We begin with a descriptive statistic that speaks to the opportunities available to students interested in receiving political advice. Approximately half of the local party leaders, donors, and political activists that responded to our survey indicated a willingness to offer advice to a student organization (574 “Definitely” or “Probably yes” vs. 580 “Might or might not”, “Probably not”, or “Definitely not”). As a reminder, participants in this study received no compensation; we did not employ a guaranteed or lottery-based mode of compensation. Instead, several hundred individuals expressed a willingness to share their advice with complete strangers.

We analyze the effect of our treatment – a gendered identity assigned to the student organization requesting advice – in the linear probability model reported in Table 2.¹² The

¹² Our pre-analysis plan specified simple linear models, which is what we report below. However, we also report the results of randomization inference analyses for the primary results in this paper in Appendix 3. The results are the same as those presented here.

results suggest a 0.05 difference in willingness to offer advice ($p=0.07$, two-tailed test). Put differently, slightly less than half (47.2%) of the control group was willing to offer professional advice to the Government and Law Society, but over a majority (52.5%) of respondents asked to advise the Women in Government and Law Society agreed that they would be interested in doing so. This provides at least suggestive evidence that women aspiring to a political career may receive additional professional development support, as measured in this survey. The modest effect sizes presented in Table 2 are also consistent with the very slight candidate gender effects in Doherty, Dowling, and Miller's (2022) conjoint experiment with party chairs.¹³

Table 2. The Women in Government and Law Society Received More Advice

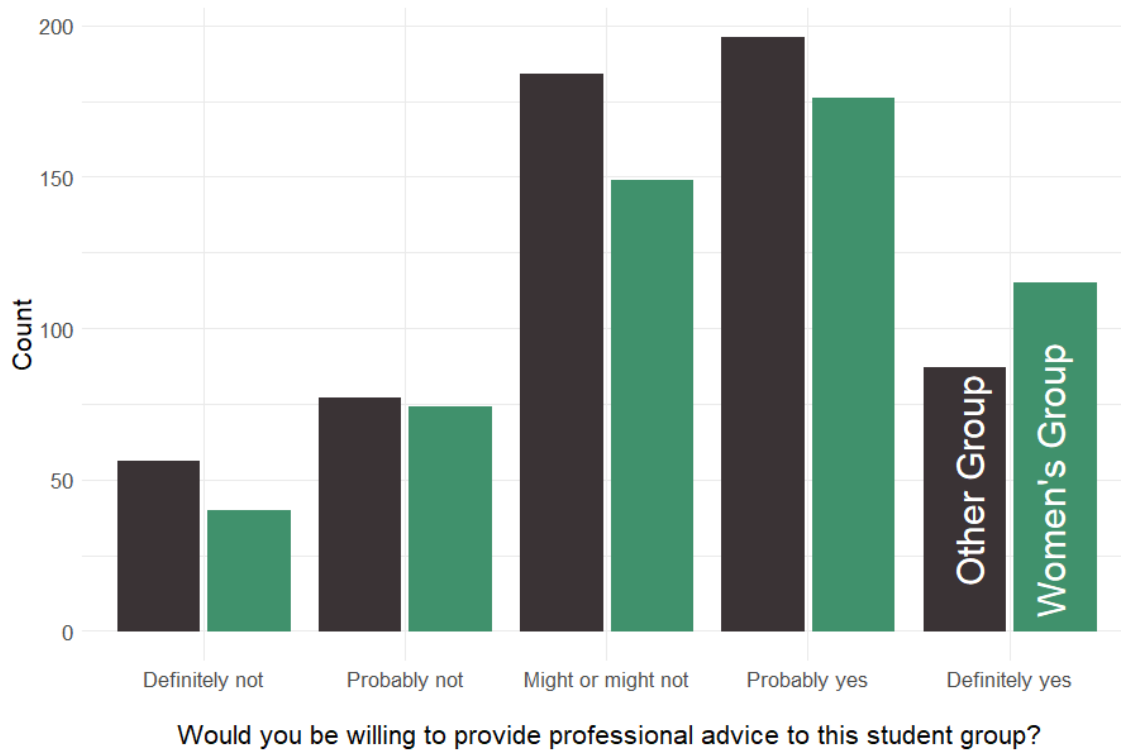
DV:	Willingness to Advise
Treatment	0.05* (0.03)
Constant	0.47*** (0.02)
Observations	1,154

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

While our pre-analysis plan specified only a dichotomous measure of willingness, we disaggregate our primary dependent variable to better understand this baseline result. In Figure 2, we show the distribution of responses for treatment (green) and control (black) groups. From this perspective, it appears that our general finding in Table 2 was driven by stronger enthusiasm (i.e., “Definitely yes” responses to requests for advice) within the treatment group.

¹³ It is worth noting that we do not evaluate the *quality* or *utility* of the advice provided by our respondents. On the whole, our impression was that the advice offered was thoughtful and genuine, but we make no claims about the exact benefit of additional advice rendered.

Figure 2. Full Distributional Comparison of the Treatment (green) and Control Group (black)



We further investigate this pattern by running a series of linear probability models with each possible response as the dependent variable. Table 3 below reports the results of these analyses. In short, we find that our treatment group is indistinguishable from our control group for nearly every variable. However, those asked to offer advice to the Women in Government & Law Society were significantly more likely (0.1, $p < 0.01$) to say they were *definitely* willing to advise students than those asked to offer advice to an otherwise identical and gender-non-specific organization. Given the control group's baseline likelihood of selecting definitely yes (also 0.1), this is a dramatic increase that strongly supports the suggestive evidence in Table 2 and Hypothesis 1, more generally.

Table 3. Treatment Effects Are Primarily Driven by Enthusiastic Support

Willingness to Provide Political Advice to the [Women in] Government & Law Society:					
DV:	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Might Or Might Not	Probably Yes	Definitely Yes
Treatment	-0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.1*** (0.02)
Constant	0.1*** (0.01)	0.1*** (0.01)	0.3*** (0.02)	0.3*** (0.02)	0.1*** (0.02)
Observations	1,154	1,154	1,154	1,154	1,154

Note: Linear probability models. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Following prior research, we also expected that Democratic women would be particularly responsive to our treatment. We report the results of a linear probability model, in which we interact the treatment with a binary indicator for Democratic Women in our sample. The coefficient of interest in Table 4 is the interaction term “Treatment X Democratic Women.”¹⁴

Table 4. Democratic Women Are Not More Likely to Respond to the Treatment

DV:	Willingness to Advise
Treatment X Democratic Woman	0.01 (0.06)
Treatment	0.05 (0.04)
Democratic Woman	0.04 (0.04)
Constant	0.46*** (0.03)
Observations	1,100

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

In short, we do not find evidence supportive of Hypothesis 2. While the coefficient on our interaction term is positive (i.e., in the expected direction), we do not see a statistically significant difference in the effect of our treatment on willingness to advise among the

¹⁴ We had 14 respondents indicate that they do not identify as a man or a woman, but instead, in “some other way.” However, a closer look at these respondents suggest that the overwhelming majority of these – if not all of them – selected this option in protest of a question that allowed for more than two answer choices. For example, one respondent wrote, “seriously - some other way? Good grief. A WOMAN!” This respondent was coded as a woman, given that they self-identified as a woman in an open-ended response.

relevant subgroup. Democratic Women were just as likely to react to the gendered nature of our student group (i.e., Women in Government and Law) as others.

To better understand these null findings, we provide a more comprehensive analysis of partisan and gendered subsamples in our study. Table 5, below, reports the impact of our treatment among all women, Democratic women (only), and Republican women (only). For comparison, we include the results of our full sample in the first column, which are identical to those presented in Table 2.

Table 5. The Treatment Leads to Greater Partisan Parity in Advice Offered to Women

DV:	Willingness to Advise, by Sub-Sample			
Sub-Sample:	All Respondents	All Women	Democratic Women	Republican Women
Treatment	0.05* (0.03)	0.09** (0.04)	0.06 (0.05)	0.20** (0.09)
Constant	0.47*** (0.02)	0.47*** (0.03)	0.50*** (0.03)	0.35*** (0.07)
Observations	1,154	525	413	112

Note: Linear probability models. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This subset analysis, which goes beyond our original pre-analysis plan, reveals some surprising findings. First, the effect of our treatment is nearly twice as large when we subset our sample to only those respondents that identify as women in our demographic questions. While our outcomes differ (i.e., advice vs candidate preference), Doherty, Dowling, and Miller (2022) did not find clear evidence that women in local party chair positions preferred candidates that were also women, and our results suggest at least a more general preference to encourage a new generation of women in politics. Second, Democratic women are *not* more willing to offer advice to the Women in Government and Law Society when we compare them to Democratic women assigned to the non-gender specific control group; both groups express high levels of willingness to offer advice.

Finally, and most remarkably, Republican women were far more likely to express willingness to advise a student organization when it identified as a women's organization. Only 35% of Republican women were willing to do so in the control, compared to 55% of Republican women in the treatment group. Put differently, Republican women were about as likely to offer advice as Democratic women, but *only* in the treatment condition.¹⁵ These findings, we argue, hold particular importance, as recent work by Thomsen and King (2020) argues, "Due to the stark gender imbalance in the GOP bench, Republican women have to be *five or six times* more likely to run than men for the number of Republican women candidates to equal the number of Republican men" (990). Republican women's extraordinary responsiveness to our treatment condition (a women's organization) thus suggests a meaningful opportunity to efficiently close this gap.

It is worth noting that the vast majority of respondents that said they would be willing to offer advice did, in fact, provide some advice in the open-ended text boxes provided in the survey; 789 of the 907 respondents that indicated that they might, probably, or definitely would offer advice followed through on that expressed interest. This amounts to an 87% follow-through rate, which was unaffected by the treatment condition; respondents were just as likely to follow-through irrespective of the name of the student organization.

Many of our respondents went further, indicating interest in participating in a "virtual, invitation-only event on the subject of political mentorship and American politics." In fact, 51% (578) of the respondents said they would consider participating in such an event should it fit within their schedule. We found no meaningful differences across our treatment

¹⁵ This pattern may reflect several plausible processes. It is possible that Republican women are eager to encourage would-be candidates that can help close the gender gap in their own party, which is larger than the gap in the Democratic Party. Alternatively, Republican women are more dismissive of gendered barriers to professional success than Democrats (Winter 2022), which may lead Republican women to also dismiss the misperception of an average gender penalty at the ballot box. This interpretation, however, runs contrary to the primary findings on hostile sexism and candidate opposition in Winter (2022).

conditions; respondents were equally likely to express interest in the proposed event. Several respondents actually went further and emailed us directly to emphasize their willingness to help out. Of the 66 emails we received, about half were from women and half were from Democrats.

Finally, we consider the content of the advice provided in the open-ended text responses during our survey. Reading the advice provided to students was a rewarding and illuminating experience. Respondents routinely emphasized the importance of local community and involvement, face-to-face interaction with neighbors, and the practical advantages of genuinely listening to opposing views. By and large, respondents encouraged students to jump in and do the unglamorous work needed by local parties and municipalities. They also emphasized a number of campaign tasks that students could expect should they decide to run for office (e.g., asking a lot of people for money, showing up to an extraordinary number of local events, and cultivating personal relationships at every possible opportunity). In sum, respondents were extraordinarily encouraging to students and overwhelmingly enthusiastic about a new generation of leaders in public service.

All manual coding conducted for this study was done in a spreadsheet that included only an anonymized identification code and open-ended responses. In coding each response, we could not match responses to *any* identifying information. More specifically, we did not know the respondent's party, gender, or treatment condition assignment in the coding process to maintain the integrity of our analyses.

We measured references to gender by manually coding each of the open-ended responses we received. If an open-ended response referenced men, women, mothers, fathers, or any other gender identity-specific language, we coded that response with a 1 (indicating gendered advice); all other responses were coded as 0. The nature of our "gendered

responses” varied quite a bit. In some cases, respondents made passing references to their own identity before providing otherwise gender non-specific advice. For example:

“I’m a member of the Cooke County Republican Women, but more active as a founding member of the Cooke County (TX) Conservatives. We want to clean up the Republican Party [...] We need leaders who pursue truth, transparency, and moral and Constitutional integrity. Political office should be a public service, not a self-serving career. As we say in North Texas, don’t be all hat and no cattle.”

In many other instances, respondents offered words of encouragement and/or a desire for greater gender representation in public office. For example:

“Women are needed badly. I am a member for the county Board of Supervisors. (some state commissioners) It is make up of 7 men. I am on the Virginia Republican 5th Congressional District Executive Committee. That has 6 men and 1 women. 50% of the population are women so about 50% of the leadership of these groups should be women.”

“If you’re already considering elective office, you’re already well ahead of the majority of women. It takes on average 7 asks for a woman to run and 2 for a man.”

“Don’t think that you have to know everything to run for office, or serve in public office. Many women won’t step up to campaign because they think they have to be experts on (fill in the blank). Men have no such misgivings.”

In some cases, respondents were quite clear in offering advice specific to women. One respondent actually split their response into “non-gender related advice” and “gendered advice” quite explicitly. More common, we received responses similar to the following examples:

“First, I would get on board a training program specifically for Democratic women: Emerge, or She Should Run. Before you declare candidacy for any office, see if you can get on the Board of Directors of a leading nonprofit in your community and learn leadership skills.”

“Ladies, GO FOR IT! Be assertive, be confident, believe in yourself! We need more women in government and running for office!”

We also hand-coded every open-ended response looking for any reference to the difficulties that a student might face in pursuing such a career. We defined difficulties as a reference to any struggles faced in entering politics, whether that be struggles faced by the

person giving advice or struggles that the person reading the advice would encounter. Through sticking to this definition during the hand-coding process, we found a very small proportion of open-ended responses referenced challenges of any sort. Many of those responses were gender-neutral, but emphasized the sheer difficulty and personal costs that candidates must endure. For example, respondents wrote that,

“Running for office is exhausting and will challenge the nature of most of your friendships.”

“Running for office is one of the hardest things you can do”

“I have seen families torn apart, marriages end because of campaigns.”

In other cases, respondents offered gender-specific advice tied to significant challenges. For example, consider the following responses:

“From the perspective of being a working woman/woman in politics, it's hard to balance work, family & obstacles that particularly affect women.”

“I think it is very important that women run for public office. They might have to work twice as hard to win but it would be worth it.”

“As a 47 year old woman in politics, one of my greatest hurdles has been managing my anxiety about the misogyny I deal with daily. I realized the mental toll it was taking to deal with contemporary legislative issues that are tied to some of my most traumatic experiences as a young woman. Never hesitate to demand personal, professional, and mental health support as you navigate politics. There is no HR department with your fellow candidates, and most state and national party leadership. I encounter issues in the political realm that I would never have to navigate on my own in a corporate environment. Create your own “HR” team to help you advocate for yourself.”

Table 6 provides results from the final two hypotheses in our paper. First, we found that our treatment group was much more likely to expressly mention gender as a part of their advice. This finding (0.21, $p < 0.001$) may seem unsurprising at a glance, but it is worth considering two key implications that follow. First, many political organizations – on and off college campuses – continue to create intentionally gendered spaces, and these groups can often be directly linked to professional development opportunities. Our findings suggest that

a group's mere name can significantly affect the nature of the professional development advice they receive. Second, the magnitude of the effect is worth further consideration. On the one hand, the effect size (0.21) is extremely large; on the other hand, less than ¼ of all respondents offering advice referenced gender within the treatment condition. In other words, the treatment dramatically increased the likelihood of receiving gendered advice, but most advice offered *in both groups* still made no expressed reference to gender. Gendered advice, clearly, was not a foregone conclusion for each respondent, and we argue that these findings provide strong support for our third hypothesis.

Table 6. The Women in Government & Law Society Received Much More Gendered Advice

DV:	Advice Mentions Gender	Advice Mentions Challenges
Treatment	0.21*** (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Constant	0.02 (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)
Observations	1,154	1,154

Note: Linear probability models: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Finally, we find no evidence that respondents were significantly more likely to reference the challenges of running for office or working in politics when speaking to the Women in Government and Law Society. These results run contrary to our fourth hypothesis, but in many respects, the finding may not be altogether surprising. Running a campaign and working in public service is extraordinarily difficult, often thankless, work, and many of the obstacles an ambitious student should consider are not gender-specific.

In other ways, the lack of a statistically significant difference between these groups is normatively reassuring. We do not find that many of the misconceptions about gender bias at the ballot box are reinforced in the advice that the treatment group received. On the contrary, much of the advice by local party leaders, activists, and donors was remarkably in line with

leading empirical research on campaigns and elections. These findings suggest that mentorship and advising opportunities may offer significant advantages to those working towards a more representative candidate pool – *without* the risk of deepening the gender ambition gap.

In summary, we found mixed support for our hypotheses. Respondents expressed a higher level of willingness to offer advice to the Women in Government and Law Society when compared to those asked to provide guidance to the (gender non-specific) Government and Law Society. These results were primarily driven by enthusiastic willingness to support women in this student organization, but the results were not driven by Democratic women as we expected. On the contrary, we found that the greatest treatment effect was detected among *Republican* women, who went from relative reluctance in considering their willingness to advise students to near parity with Democratic women (and other groups). Finally, we did not find statistically significant evidence that the women’s organization received advice that more heavily emphasized challenges they might face in pursuing a career in politics, but we did find a large increase in gendered advice for this group. Taken together, these findings suggest that gender identity can meaningfully affect the nature of political mentorship offered to college students interested in public service.

Discussion

American democracy is nearly 250 years old, and in many respects, the nation is still stumbling – inconsistently – towards a truly representative, republican form of government. Women were denied the right to vote for most of American history, and just over 3% of the 12,421 individuals to have ever served in the U.S. Congress have been women.¹⁶ To state the

¹⁶ See: <https://history.house.gov/Institution/Total-Members/Total-Members/#:~:text=Since%20the%20U.S.%20Congress%20convened,with%20service%20in%20both%20chambers.>

obvious, American women have systematically been denied an equitable voice in national policymaking over the last two and a half centuries.

Fortunately, recent trends in electoral politics suggest that the nation is on a path toward greater gender parity. Women are more likely to hold positions of local, state, and national lawmaking authority than ever before, and increasingly, prominent women hold key positions of political power within their respective political institutions. Women make up a majority of the voting electorate today, and the midterms in 2022 are likely to lead to even greater gains in representation by women in many corners of the country.

Nevertheless, an astonishing gap remains in U.S. politics. Nearly two-in-three candidates presented to the American voter will be men on the ballot this November. Consequently, progress towards greater representation is likely to stall until more women secure nominations from their respective parties. As researchers have persistently shown, women are likely to underestimate their prospects of winning elections and express lower levels of political ambition relative to men with similar educational and professional backgrounds (Fox and Lawless 2010). Efforts to increase the number of women on the campaign trail must first address key problems in candidate recruitment pipelines and the obstacles that women perceive when considering a bid for office.

We have argued in this paper that those interested in electing more women have an opportunity to address this problem through political mentorship opportunities early in a would-be candidate's political career. Towards this end, we have investigated how gender can affect both the likelihood and substance of advice offered to a group of college students by Americans in a strong position to help. Our results – taken from a new survey of thousands of local party leaders, donors, and activists from across the country – suggest that women are slightly more likely to receive advice. Moreover, the advice they receive is both gendered and, contrary to our expectations, not more likely to reinforce the many challenges associated with

a bid for public office. Women's clubs on colleges campus, simply put, experience a very different form of political mentorship from individuals well-positioned to support potential candidates, and advice rendered to these groups may help in overcoming the ambition gap in political candidacy.

The limitations of our research raise many promising avenues for future research. Our sampling framework attempted to mirror, as much as possible, a cold-call request for advice that might be distributed by a real college club; as such, we offered no financial compensation or other direct benefits to respondents, leading to a remarkably low response rate. The results presented in this study may lay the groundwork for an experimental study of a formal mentorship program that offers financial compensation for those willing to share advice and guidance with would-be candidates.

Moreover, we have only scratched the surface with one of many deficits in American political representation. In future studies, researchers can both take a more comprehensive approach to understanding candidate gender and explore the more complex, intersectional identities of potential leaders in the United States (e.g., move beyond one gender identity). No study can address all of the gaps in political candidacy, but our extraordinarily narrow focus on women is meant to inform much-needed future lines of inquiry in this space.

Political institutions constrain and shape policymaking in extraordinary ways, and no single candidate can be expected to solve monumental problems in the United States. Nevertheless, positions of formal power allow a very small subset of Americans to rethink or reinforce the nature of American political institutions and the policy outcomes that follow. It matters, quite obviously, who is elected to serve in local, state, and federal positions of lawmaking authority. By soliciting feedback from party leaders, activists, and donors, we do not mean to suggest that a few simple words of advice is all that is needed to overcome a deeply entrenched gap in political representation. We do argue, however, that the research on

this topic suggests that greater progress can be made – and made more quickly – by investigating the effects of gender at an informal, but meaningful, stage in the development of a would-be candidate's political ambitions.

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Online Appendix #1: Survey Instrument

Figure A1. Recruitment email distributed to potential respondents.

Dear [Name],

I am writing to formally invite you to participate in the American Political Leadership Survey. The goal of this study is to learn from local political leaders, political donors, and other prominent members of the two major parties. In short, we want to learn from Americans like you.

The survey is a non-partisan, collaborative research project largely managed by students at Lafayette College. It should take less than 15 minutes to complete the survey, and the results of this study will directly inform the way that students and scholars think about American politics. All responses are anonymized, and we will not record any additional identifying information, such as IP addresses, should you choose to participate in the study.

Please click on the link below if you are willing to help our students better understand American politics from your professional and personal experience.

[LINK HERE]

Note that there is no direct compensation for your participation in this study. While your insights will be shared with key policymakers and an international community of scholars, your decision to support this student-faculty collaboration is entirely voluntary.

On behalf of myself and our student researchers at Lafayette, I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this request. Thank you in advance for considering our request for your thoughts on these important matters.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Andrew Clarke, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Government & Law
Lafayette College

Figure A2. Prompt (Control Condition)

Your advice is especially valuable to our most politically ambitious students here on campus.

One group -- the Government and Law Society -- wanted to more directly ask you for professional advice.



The Government and Law Society is a non-partisan organization at Lafayette College.

Their aim is to provide opportunities for students to learn about careers in the legal and political professions and educate their members on various areas of the law and politics.

Many of these students are seriously considering a future run for elected office.



Figure A3. Prompt (Treatment Condition)

Your advice is especially valuable to our most politically ambitious students here on campus.

One group -- the Women in Government and Law Society -- wanted to more directly ask you for professional advice.



The Women in Government and Law Society is a non-partisan women's organization at Lafayette College.

Their aim is to provide opportunities for women to learn about careers in the legal and political professions and educate their members on various areas of the law and politics.

Many of these students are seriously considering a future run for elected office.



Figure A4. Willingness to Advice Outcome Measure (Both Conditions)

Are you willing to provide professional advice to the Women in Government and Law Society?

Definitely yes

☐

Probably yes

☐

Might or might not

☐

Probably not

☐

Definitely not

☐



Are you willing to provide professional advice to the Government and Law Society?

Definitely yes

☐

Probably yes

☐

Might or might not

☐

Probably not

☐

Definitely not

☐



Figure A5. Open-Ended Advice Outcome Measure (Both Conditions)

If you have a moment, please use the text box below to share your advice with students in the Women in Government and Law Society.



If you have a moment, please use the text box below to share your advice with students in the Government and Law Society.



Figure A6. Event Interest Question (Both Conditions)

The Government and Law Society is also thinking about organizing a virtual, invitation-only event on the subject of political mentorship and American politics.

Would you consider participating in this online event if it works with your schedule?

Yes, I would consider participating in this event.

☐

No, I am not currently interested.

☐

The Women in Government and Law Society is also thinking about organizing a virtual, invitation-only event on the subject of political mentorship and American politics.

Would you consider participating in this online event if it works with your schedule?

Yes, I would consider participating in this event.

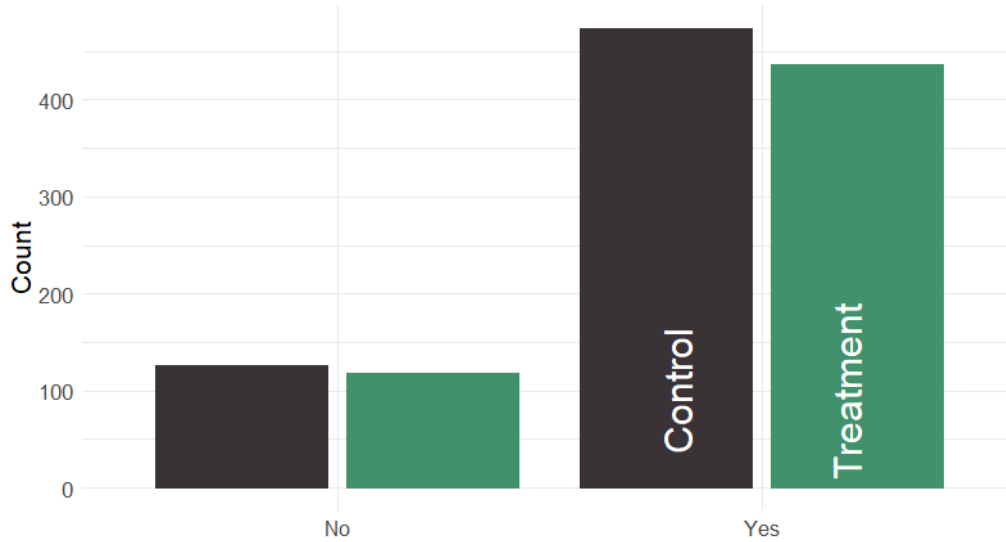
☐

No, I am not currently interested.

☐

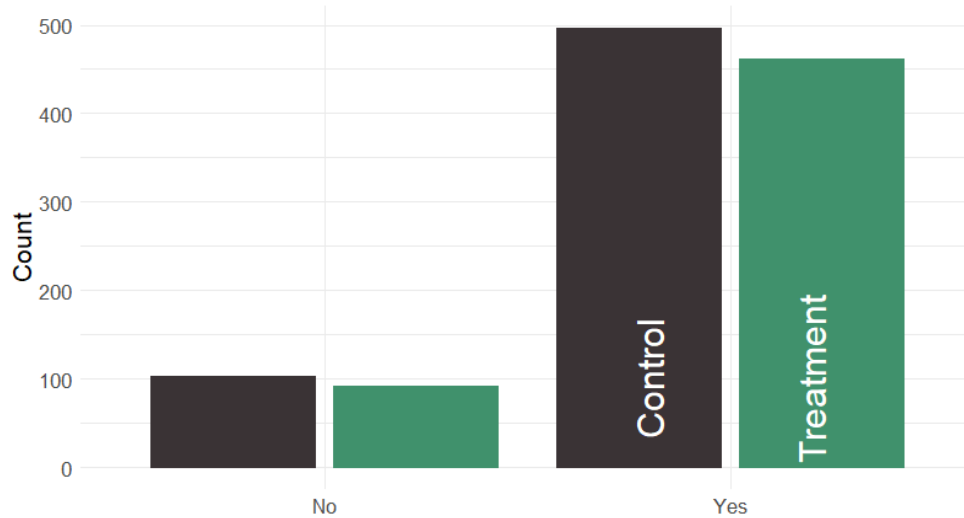
Online Appendix #2: Demographics

Figure A7. Political Engagement (Meetings), by Treatment Condition



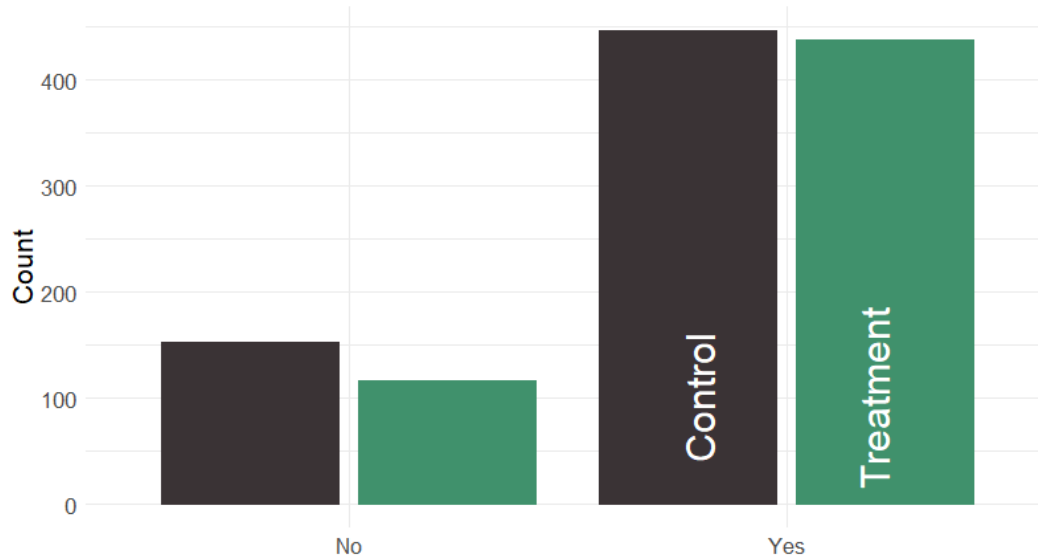
Over the last two years, have you attended local political meetings (such as school board or city council)?

Figure A8. Political Engagement (Signs), by Treatment Condition



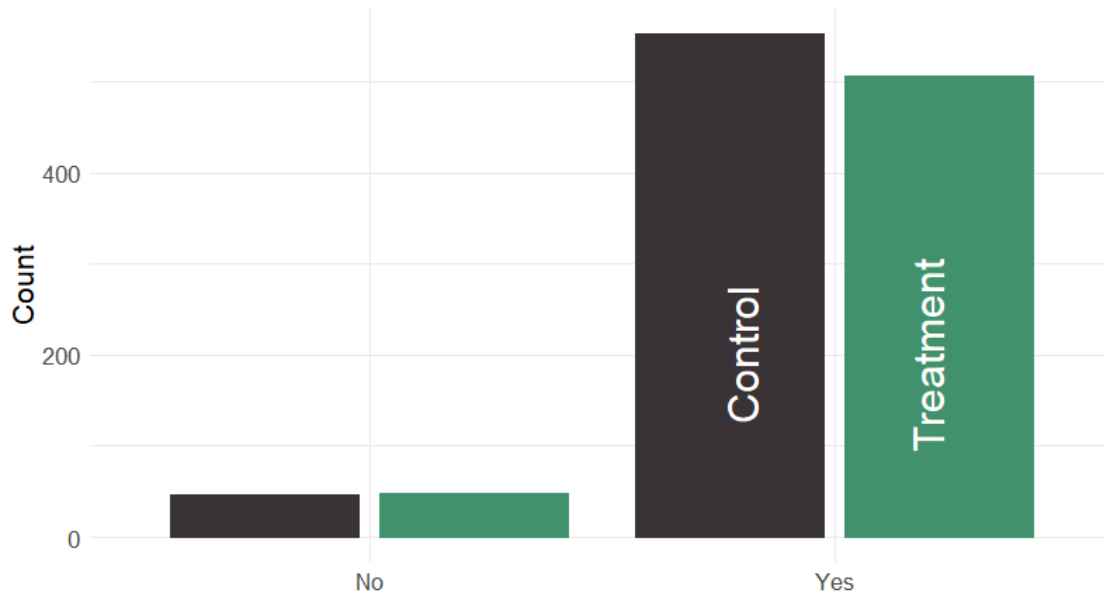
Over the last two years, have you put up a political sign (such as a lawn sign or bumper sticker)?

Figure A9. Political Engagement (Campaign Work), by Treatment Condition



Over the last two years, have you
volunteered or worked for a campaign?

Figure A10. Political Engagement (Donate), by Treatment Condition



Over the last two years, have you
donated money to a candidate, campaign, or political organization?

Figure A11. Political Engagement (Vote), by Treatment Condition

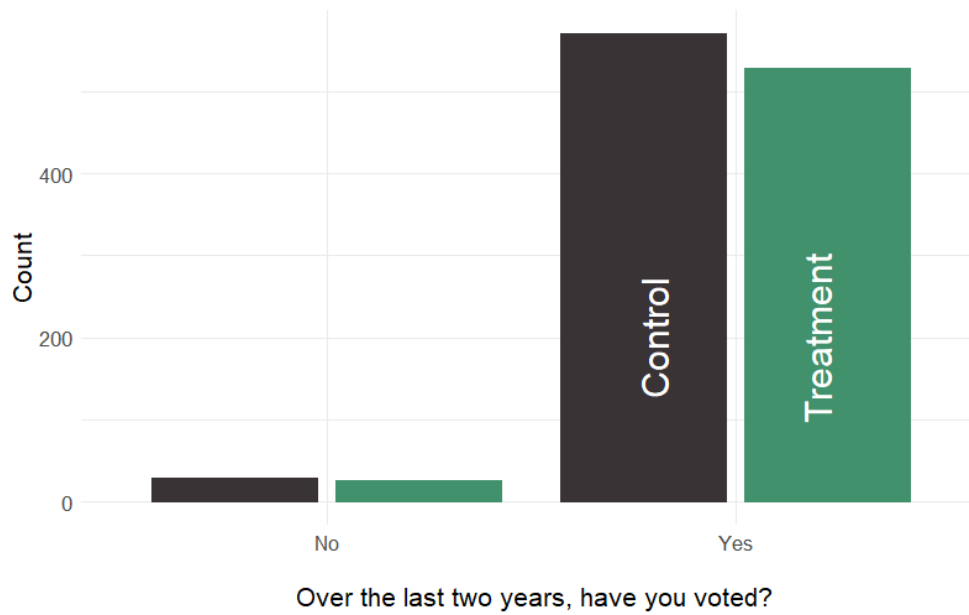


Figure A12. Party Identification (Self-Reported), by Treatment Condition

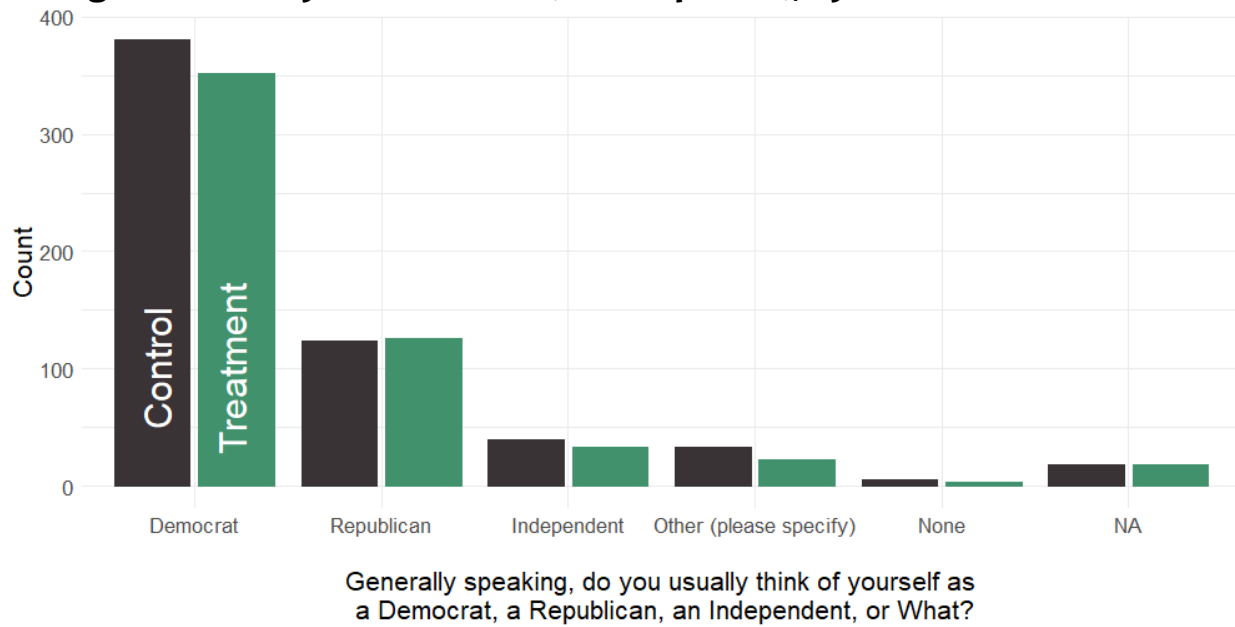
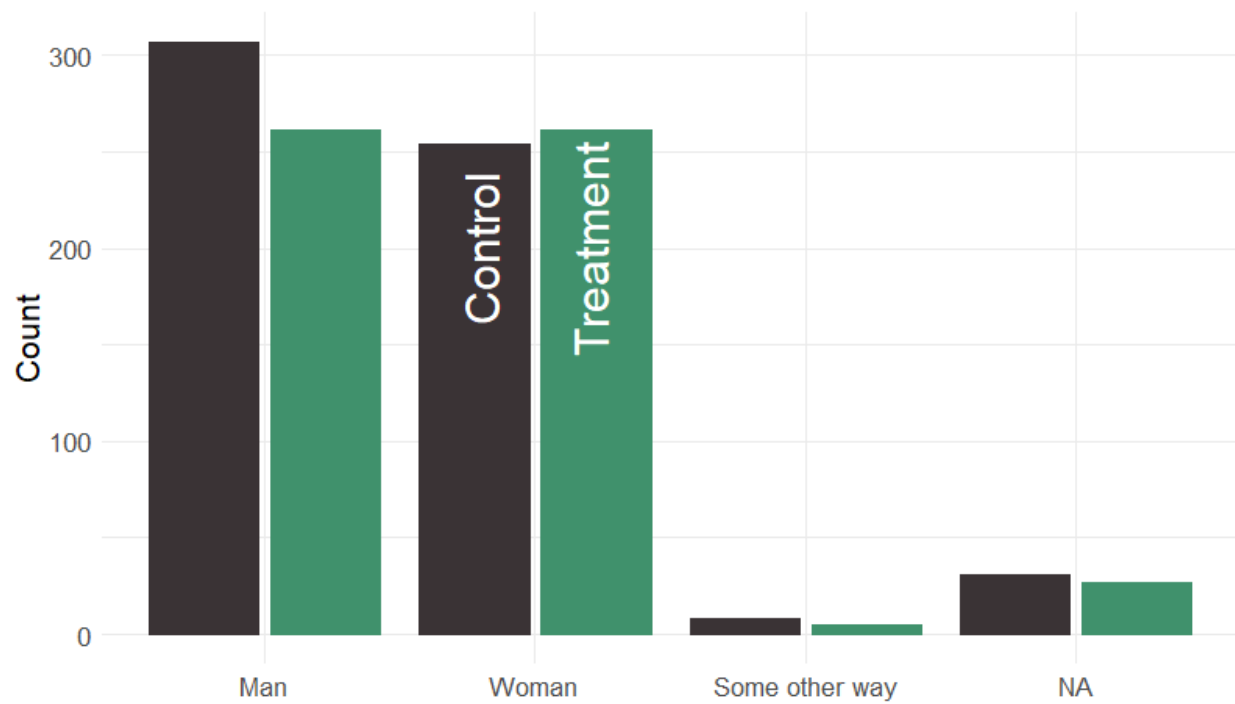
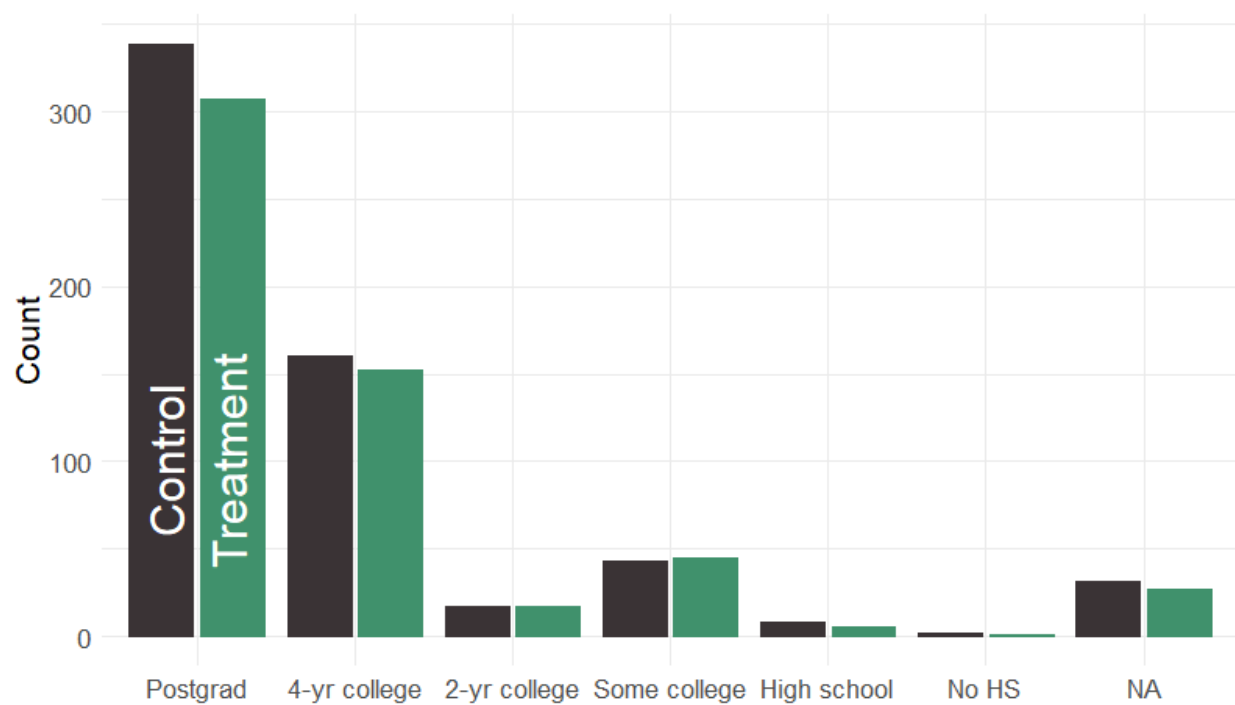


Figure A13. Gender, By Treatment Condition



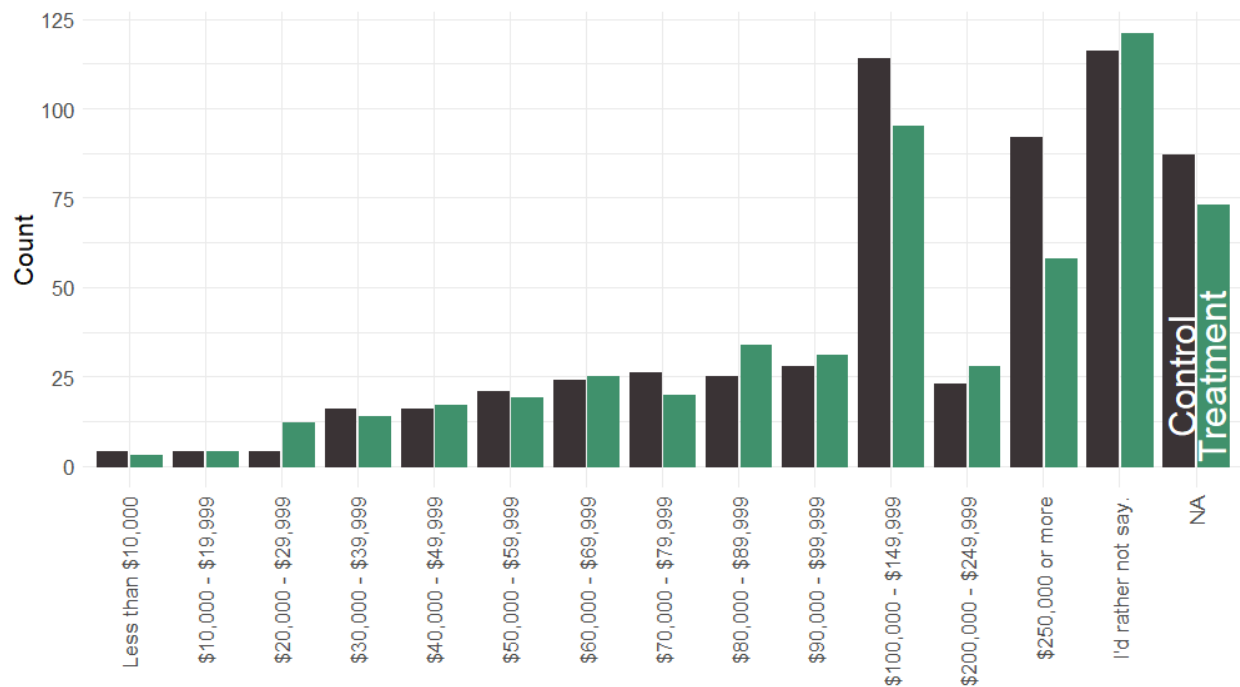
Do you describe yourself as a man, a woman, or in some other way?

Figure A14. Education, By Treatment Condition



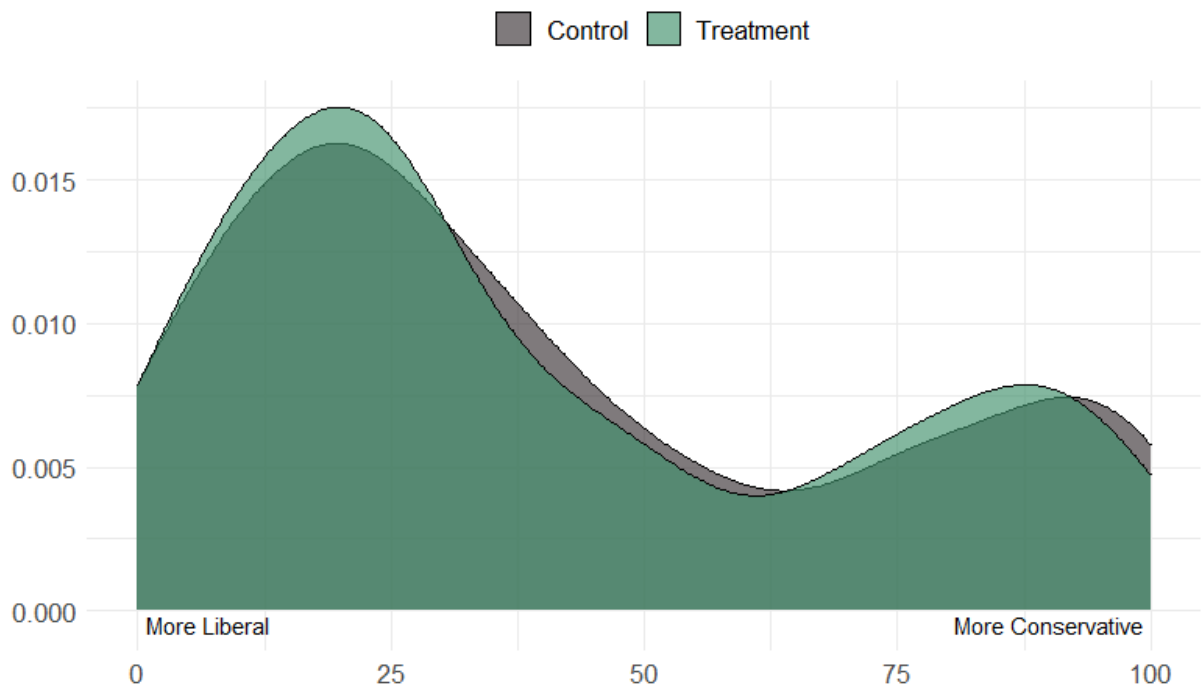
What is the highest level of education you hav completed?

Figure A15. Income, By Treatment Condition



Thinking back over the last year, what was your family's annual income?

Figure A16. Ideology, By Treatment Condition



How would you place yourself on the following ideological scale?

Figure A17. Birth Year, By Treatment Condition

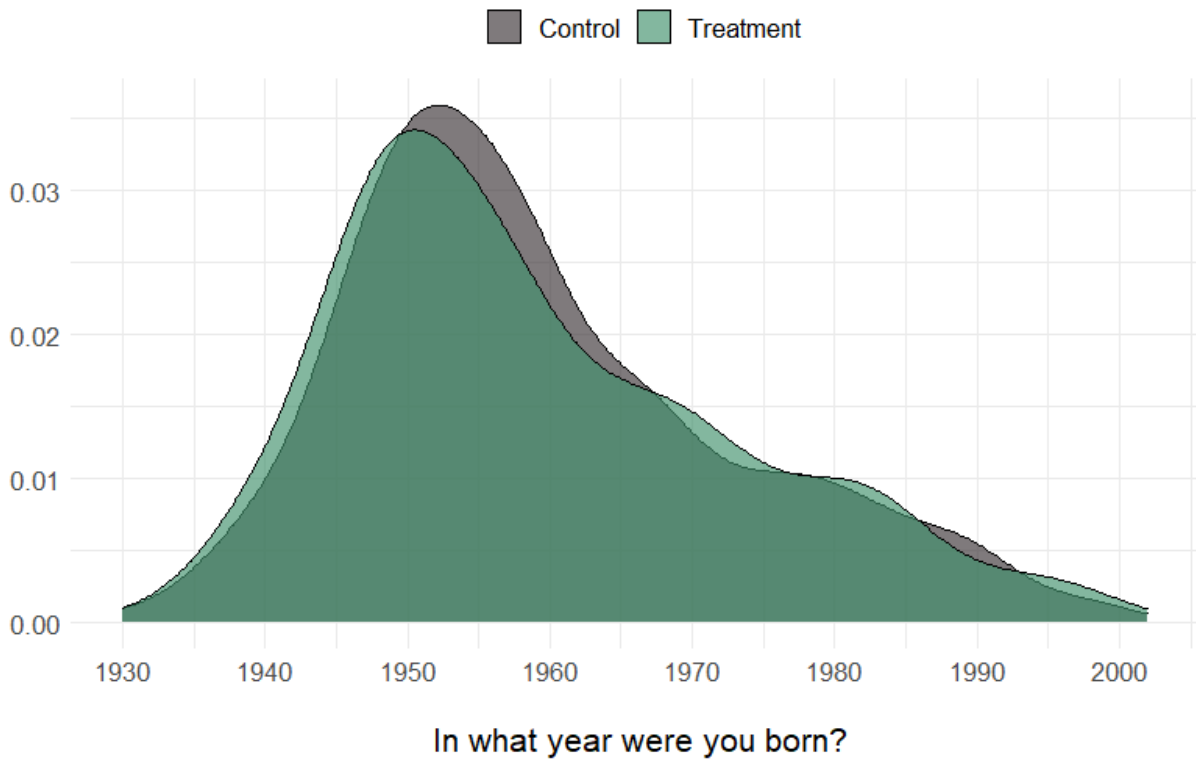
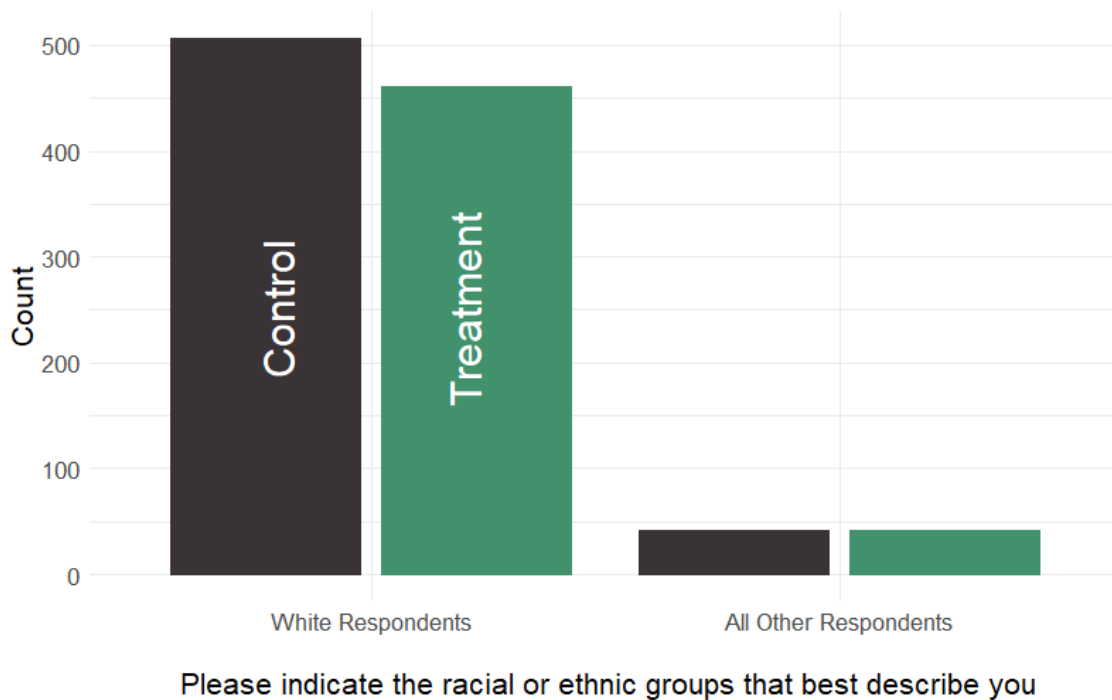
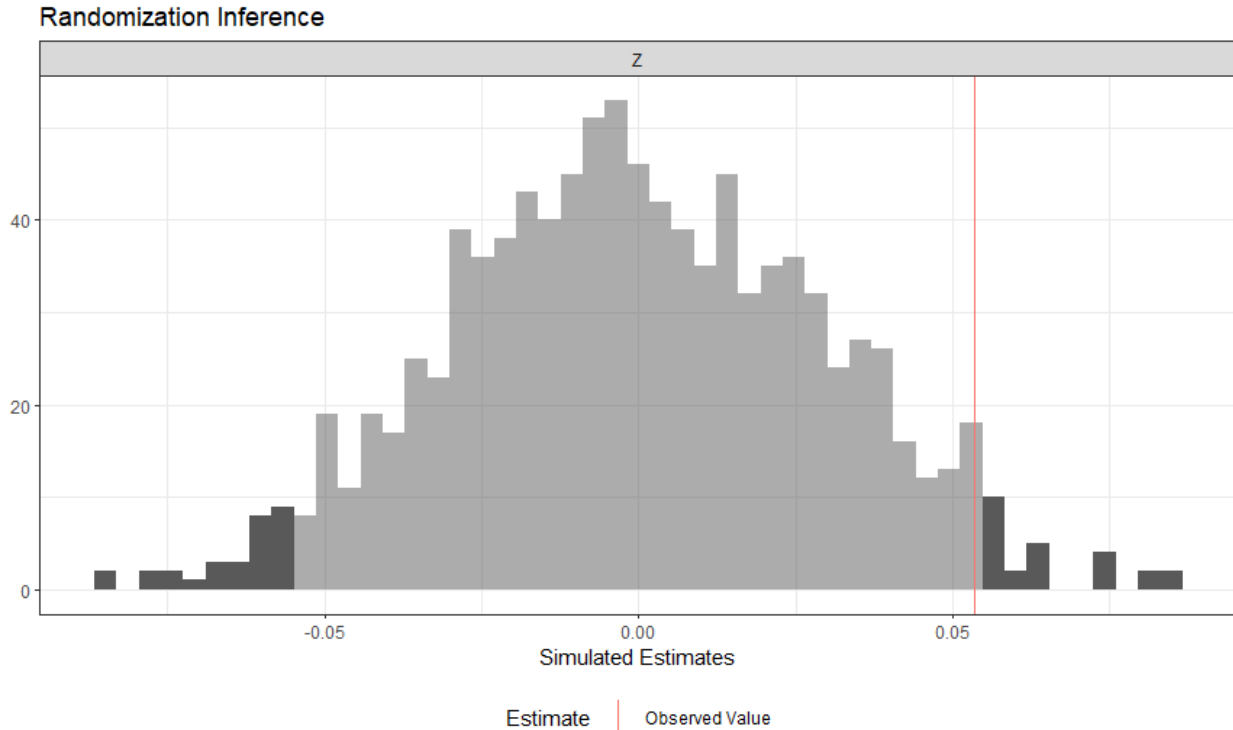


Figure A18. Race and Ethnic Group, By Treatment Condition



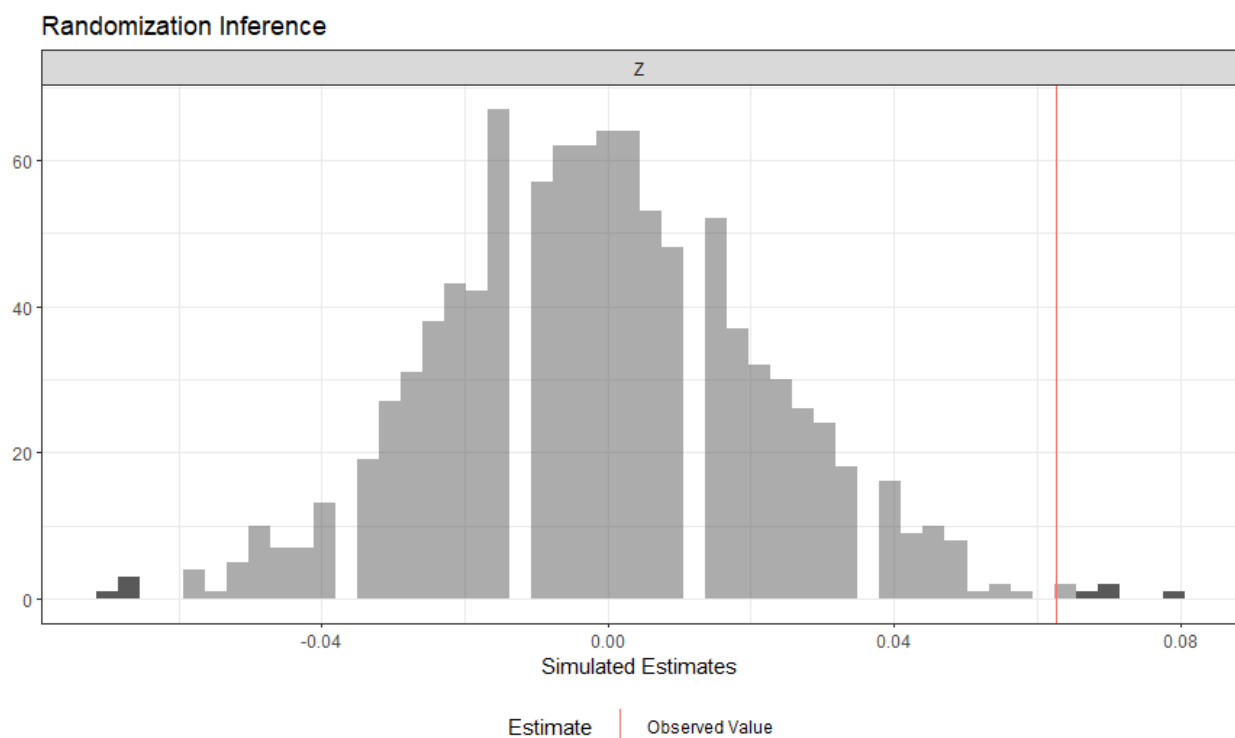
Online Appendix #3: Randomization Inference Analyses

Figure A19. Estimate from Table 2 Using Randomization Inference



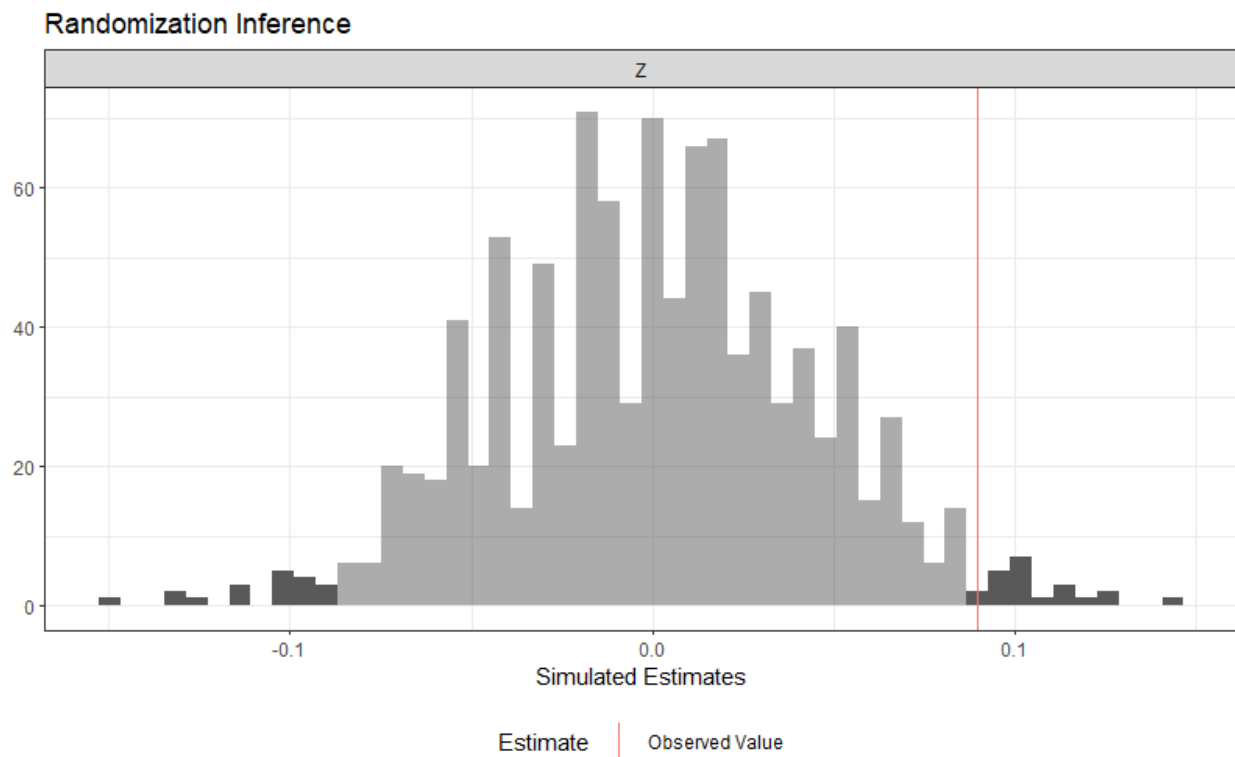
- Dependent variable: Willing to Support (“Definitely Yes” or “Probably Yes”) (0,1)
- Treatment variable: Randomly assigned to “Women in Government & Law”
- Estimate: 0.05
- Two-tailed p-value under randomization inference: 0.055
- Interpretation: a very small proportion of placebo treatment effects were larger than the estimated treatment effect.

Figure A20. Estimate from Table 3 Using Randomization Inference



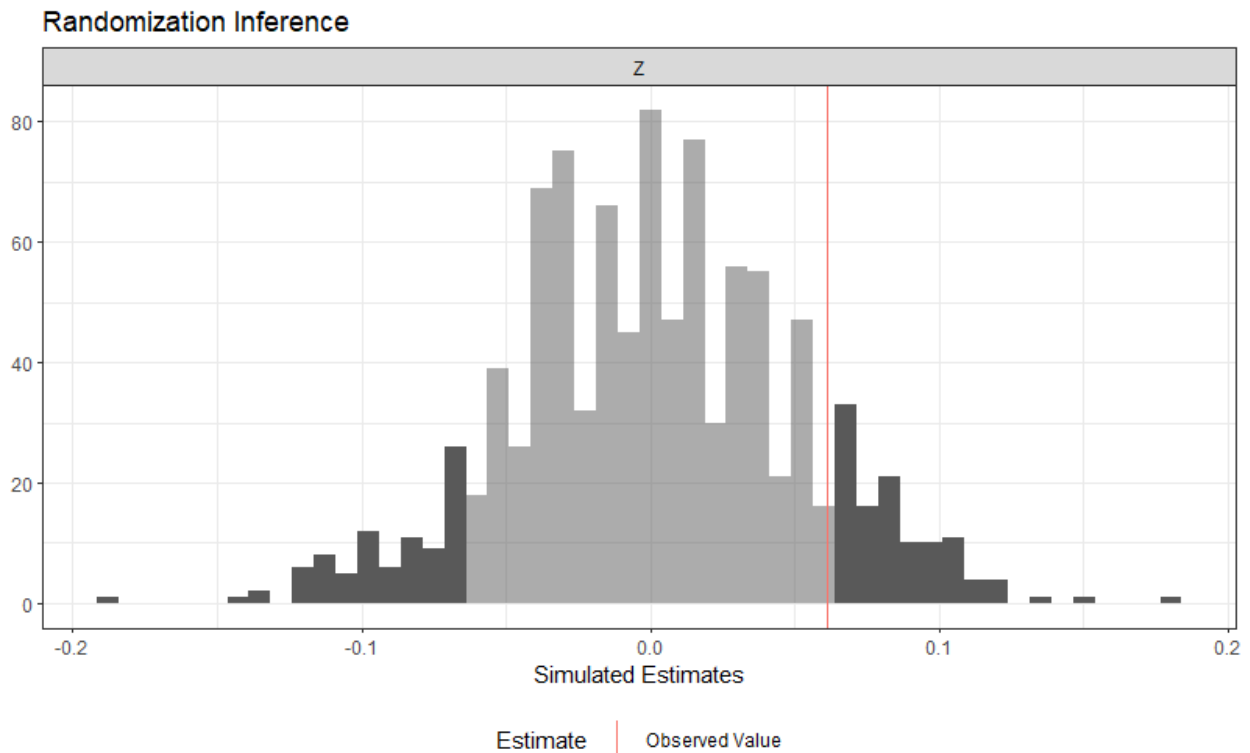
- Dependent variable: “Definitely Yes” (0,1)
- Treatment variable: Randomly assigned to “Women in Government & Law”
- Estimate: 0.06
- Two-tailed p-value under randomization inference: 0.008
- Interpretation: a very small proportion of placebo treatment effects were larger than the estimated treatment effect.

Figure A21. Estimate from Table 5, Column B, Using Randomization Inference



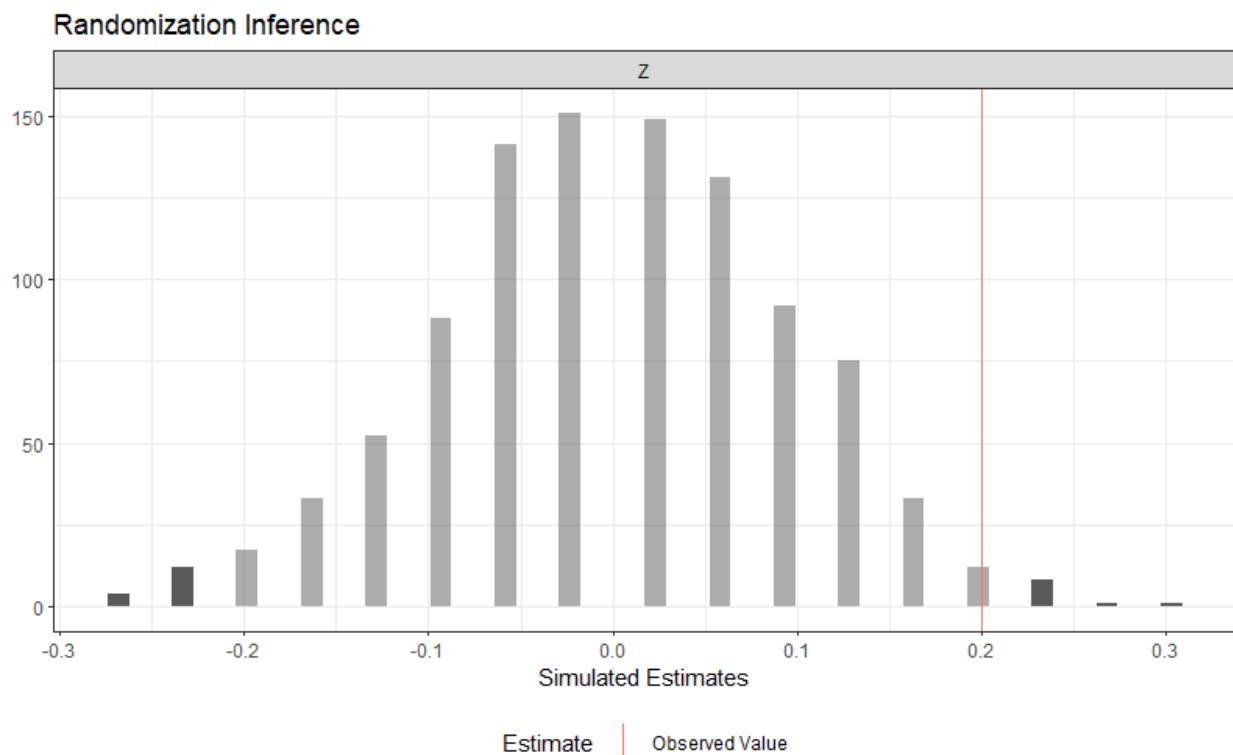
- Dependent variable: Willing to Support ("Definitely Yes" or "Probably Yes") (0,1)
- Treatment variable: Randomly assigned to "Women in Government & Law"
- Subsample: women
- Estimate: 0.09
- Two-tailed p-value under randomization inference: 0.04
- Interpretation: a very small proportion of placebo treatment effects were larger than the estimated treatment effect.

Figure A22. Estimate from Table 5, Column C, Using Randomization Inference



- Dependent variable: Willing to Support (“Definitely Yes” or “Probably Yes”) (0,1)
- Treatment variable: Randomly assigned to “Women in Government & Law”
- Subsample: Democratic women
- Estimate: 0.06
- Two-tailed p-value under randomization inference: 0.2
- Interpretation: a sizable proportion of placebo treatment effects were larger than the estimated treatment effect.

Figure A23. Estimate from Table 5, Column D, Using Randomization Inference



- Dependent variable: Willing to Support (“Definitely Yes” or “Probably Yes”) (0,1)
- Treatment variable: Randomly assigned to “Women in Government & Law”
- Subsample: Republican women
- Estimate: 0.2
- Two-tailed p-value under randomization inference: 0.03
- Interpretation: a very small proportion of placebo treatment effects were larger than the estimated treatment effect.