

PARTIES MATTER: THE IMPACT OF PENNSYLVANIA'S PARTIES  
ON WOMEN'S LOCAL OFFICEHOLDING

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And approved by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION  
PARTIES MATTER: THE IMPACT OF PENNSYLVANIA'S PARTIES  
ON WOMEN'S LOCAL OFFICEHOLDING

By

DANA MARIE BROWN

Dissertation Director:

Kira Sanbonmatsu

According to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University the state of Pennsylvania ranks 39<sup>th</sup> in the nation in terms of the proportion of women serving in the state legislature. Pennsylvania has never elected a woman governor or U.S. Senator. However, women fare better at county level government. Thirty-seven percent of the countywide officials across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are women, yet 66% of the women serving in countywide government can be found in administrative positions. The paucity of women serving in Pennsylvania's elective offices is worthy of inquiry as we know from research that women representatives offer a different voice on many public policy issues. Why are women so underrepresented? Political science has tested various variables: women's lack of political ambition, negative gatekeeping by political parties, and gender stereotypes negative impacting women candidates, just to name a few.

This dissertation focuses on the role county parties play in recruiting women candidates to run for political office in Pennsylvania. Political science has historically deemed Pennsylvania to be a strong party state that deters all newcomers to the political game. I anticipate that Pennsylvania's political parties will still be strong, which will correlate with low levels of women's county officeholding. In terms of recruitment

efforts, I expect strong county parties to pull from insular networks that are extensions of the party leaders themselves. On the other hand, I expect weak county parties to cast a wide net for candidate recruitment and engage external networks to identify candidates. I utilize survey and interview data provided by the Pennsylvania county party chairs and vice-chairs to understand recruitment and its impact on women's officeholding.

## **Acknowledgements and Dedication**

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## Dedication

For all of the little girls who were told they can't.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

What are America's political and governing systems without political parties? Since the dawn of the United States scholars and pols alike have debated the impact and importance of political parties on the health of American democracy. The debate has included whether America's governing structures could even be possible without parties – so famously typified by Schattschneider's (1942) statement, "The political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties." This argument is in stunning contrast to America's first president, George Washington, who saw the development of political factions with a different perspective. While Washington understood the importance of organizing amongst his citizens, he feared that factions could divide the public and its governing institutions. Washington feared that political parties would create a "match play" system where they would work to score political points against one another as opposed to participating in good governance. While these debates have a genesis dating hundreds of years ago, the questions remain relevant. Whether you are convinced that parties advance democratic ideals or hamper them, political parties cannot be ignored.

Only within the past few decades have political scientists turned their attention to linking the strength of the party system to that of America's representational bodies. Most notably, women and politics scholars have begun to investigate the relationship between the lack of descriptive representation in governing bodies by women and what responsibility, if any, political parties have in creating a representative governing body. More specifically, women and politics researchers have taken on the age-old debate of

whether weak or strong parties are advantageous or a hindrance to establishing a pipeline of female candidates. It is this very question this dissertation seeks to address.

### Chapter Goals

To begin the dissertation I first review the current status of women in American politics and political science's efforts to understand the lack of women's representation in elective office. Next, I make the case as to why it is important to study women and politics. Then I begin to unpack the intersection of gender and political parties, specifically the role political parties play in candidate recruitment. As part of the discussion of party politics I review two ongoing debates: whether the Pennsylvania party system is strong, and secondly, the impact party strength may have on female descriptive representation. After laying the theoretical background I identify the research questions that motivate this dissertation. As part of that section I identify what methods and data I employ in order to evaluate the research questions. Finally, I explain why Pennsylvania is a solid case study with which to test ideas concerning women candidates' recruitment by the county party apparatus and the relationship between party strength and women's representation. Lastly, I review the contributions of this study as well as the layout of the dissertation.

### The Status of Women's Representation

It was the best of times for women in American politics and it was the worst of times. In 2015 women hold 19.4% of the seats in the U.S. Congress: 20 seats in the U.S. Senate and 84 in the U.S. House of Representatives, which is an all-time high for both chambers (CAWP 2013b). In the 2008 presidential race the Republican Party nominated, for the first time in its history, a woman vice presidential candidate, Governor Sarah Palin

of Alaska. On the Democratic side of the 2008 race for the presidential nomination, Hillary Clinton received 18 million votes in the primary election before ultimately falling to Barack Obama. Additionally, the first female Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, led the 110th and 111th Congresses. These are groundbreaking moments for women and politics, but not glass ceiling shattering. After all, in 2010 for the first time in over thirty years, women did not increase their descriptive representation in the U.S. Congress (CAWP 2015a). Comparing the representation of women in the U.S. federal legislature internationally does not yield positive results either. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's research (IPU 2013), the United States of America is ranked 77<sup>th</sup> with regards to the percentage of women in the national legislature. Nations that have more women at the legislative table include: Rwanda, Denmark, Germany, Canada, and Costa Rica, just to name a few. We also know that while America continues to wait for its first female head of state, many other countries like Germany, South Korea, and Brazil have already gone on to elect women executives.

When one moves to review state and local level data, the story is no different. The Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University finds that women reside in six of the fifty states' gubernatorial mansions and hold just 23.6% of the state legislative seats that are available. Of the 1,351 mayors of cities with a population over 30,000 – only 18.4% are women (CAWP 2015b). The big question is *why*. Why are there so few female representatives in America? Over fifty percent of the American population is female and they have continually “out registered” and “out voted” their male counterparts since 1980 (CAWP 2013d). For example, in the 2008 presidential election, the U.S. Census Bureau (2012a) reports that, “women had a higher voting rate (66

percent) than males (62 percent).” Therefore, we know that American women are engaged in the political process and know of the important role they play in our elections. Equally, we know from recent presidential and congressional campaign rhetoric that candidates are aware of women’s turnout at the ballot box and consider women to be an important voting bloc<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, there have been changes in gender roles impacting educational and professional achievements for women as a whole that lead one to believe that those attainments would translate into gains in the political realm; yet, when it comes to running for and holding political office, women are not to be found at rates equal to that of men. The puzzle of course is – why? Why are so few women holding elective office positions given women’s engagement in the political process and educational and professional achievements? Is it that women lack political ambition? Is it that voters are prejudiced against female candidates? Is the political party structure gendered in a way that prefers male candidates?

#### Why Are Women Underrepresented in Elective Office?

Scholars have used a myriad of methods and theories to understand why women remain underrepresented descriptively in elective office. Some recent studies investigating the roots of this underrepresentation have fallen into the following categories: lack of political ambition to run among potential female candidates (Kanthak and Woon 2014; Baer 2013; Shafer 2008; Fox and Lawless 2004); lack of recruitment efforts by political parties and elites (Niven 1998; Sanbonmatsu 2006; Crowder-Meyer 2010, 2013); institutional constraints such as the incumbency advantage (Fox 1997;

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<sup>1</sup> I acknowledge that women are not a monolithic voting bloc, but the media attention surrounding the “war on women” and the “women’s vote” from the 2012 presidential election lead me to articulate that candidates understand that women turnout to vote at higher rates than men.



Burrell 1994); and reliance upon gender stereotypes by voters (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Sanbonmatsu 2002).

In Barbara Burrell's (1994) famous book, *A Woman's Place is in the House: Campaigning for Congress in the Feminist Era*, the author argues successfully that women win elections at the same rate as men. She reviews election outcomes for the primary and general elections for men and women running for the U.S. House of Representatives from 1968 through 1992. Through this analysis she is able to dispel the myth that women do not win elections and that they do not raise as much money as men; hence, making this one of the most important works in women and politics literature that is still cited today. However, just like male challengers, she finds that female challengers do have an uphill battle running against an incumbent. The incumbency advantage is alive and well in the U.S. House of Representatives and she finds that with incumbency comes an increase in funding from interest groups, party organizations, and donors. So, while the incumbency advantage does negatively impact female challengers, it also negatively impacts male challengers as well.

Similar to Burrell's investigation, Richard Fox's (1997) *Gender Dynamics in Congressional Elections* compares men and women's candidacies for the U.S. House of Representatives in order to determine if institutional processes negatively impact women at a higher rate. However, Fox only examines House races in California in 1992 and 1994. Fox focuses his work on three types of dynamics in congressional elections: men and women enter the campaign for different reasons (i.e. electoral differences); men and women candidates are affected by expected traditional gender roles (i.e. behavioral differences); and lastly, because of these behavioral and electoral differences, Fox

expected that the campaigns would be more challenging for women candidates than men candidates. Fox expected to find that the electoral and behavioral differences would manifest themselves in the campaign, such as: less money raised by female candidates, less positive media on female candidates, and less party support for female candidates. Interestingly, while he was able to document these discrepancies between male and female candidates – the election outcomes were not any different for the male and female candidates. Fox's book confirmed Burrell's early 1994 work, which utilized national data. Thus, in terms of electoral, institutional, and behavioral biases, while they may exist, they do not impact election outcomes. Women win at the same rates as men, when considering them for the same type of races.

In addition to Burrell (1994) and Fox's (1997) work on institutional challenges to women candidates, scholars were also hypothesizing about the role that gender stereotypes play in elections. Using an experiment, Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) investigated whether voters expected female candidates to be more competent on issues of "compassion" and male candidates to be more competent on issues of the military and defense. They tested two different types of gender stereotyping: gender-trait stereotypes that emphasize a candidate's gender-linked personality traits, and gender-belief stereotypes that placing greatest importance on the differing political outlooks of male and female candidates<sup>2</sup>. After exposing 297 undergraduates to two different fictitious candidates, the researchers concluded that there was stronger evidence of the trait stereotype being utilized than the belief stereotype. Subjects measured warm and expressive candidates to be better on compassion issues and instrumental candidates were

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<sup>2</sup> An example of a gender-belief stereotype would be that women are more liberal than men.

rated as more competent on military and economic issues. On the one hand, the literature indicates that election results are not affected by electoral or voter bias (Burrell 1994; Fox 1997), on the other hand, gender stereotypes impact voter beliefs on issue competency (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993). In an effort to get the two types of literature to talk to one another, Sanbonmatsu (2002) created an experiment that combines vote choice and gender stereotyping.

In Sanbonmatsu's (2002) article, "Gender Stereotypes and Vote Choice," she argued that many voters have what she calls a "baseline gender preference" to vote for male or female candidates. She created two fictitious candidates (one male and the other female) and asked subjects to evaluate candidates on traits, beliefs, and issue competencies. Sanbonmatsu expected subjects to have an "in-group" preference for a candidate – the candidate that looks most like their social group phenotypically. Sanbonmatsu (2002) did find evidence of an "in-group" preference for candidates in the hypothetical ballot box. In sum, scholars found evidence of potential voters employing gender stereotypes as a decision-tool at the ballot box. However, neither stereotype employment nor an in-group preference on behalf of the voter may prevent women from winning elections.

In the early 2000's, the discipline turned to review the supply of women candidates since the campaign contest itself did not find much bias that affected election outcomes. The question of whether women lack the political ambition necessary to run for elective office is one that merits attention. In order to explore this idea, Fox and Lawless (2004) conducted a national survey of women and men in the candidate "eligibility pool," which encompasses professions in law, business, and education. Fox

and Lawless (2004) found that men in each of the professions were more than twice as likely as women to say that they have considered running for elective office. However, they also found that women were as likely, or more than likely, to have positive feelings about campaign activities such as, “going door to door,” “dealing with party officials,” and “dealing with the press.” A more recent article by Lawless and Fox (2010) found that when women were encouraged to run for office by leaders of political parties, the women’s ambition increased. Thus, while the authors indicate that women have lower levels of ambition on average, ambition can be supported and encouraged by the political parties. Unfortunately, for activists and researchers interested in having women reach parity in elective office, Lawless and Fox’s data show that gatekeepers seek men to run at higher rates than they do women (2010, 322). In sum, while work on gender stereotypes and political ambition are important, more and more work suggests that political recruitment by elites is what undergirds this problem of underrepresentation of women in elective office.

Continuing this line of inquiry is the works of Denise Baer (2013) and Karen Shafer (2008). Baer and Shafer investigate the intersections of political ambition, the party elite, and candidate emergence through their work on the ambitions of party activists. They ask: Are the men and women party members recruited and cultivated as potential candidates at the same rates? Baer (2013) uses the Party Elite Study<sup>3</sup> administered to Democratic and Republican nominating convention delegates every presidential election year since 1980. In a summary of her conclusions, Baer (2013) writes, “Consistent with prior political science research outside of women and politics

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<sup>3</sup> Baer’s survey also included national committee members, state chairs, and county chairs.

research, ambition can be understood as strategic and learned through multiple stages both within and outside of the parties – rather than simply reflecting gendered individual characteristics”. When reviewing recruitment patterns, Baer (2013) did not find gender differences in recruitment to party office, but once inside the party, male activists were recruited more heavily for public office than their female counterparts<sup>4</sup>.

Shafer (2008) also uses a delegate survey to determine the political ambition level for men and women seeking state legislative office. Shafer finds that the candidate emergence process is indeed gendered and because of the gendered recruitment efforts, women are less ambitious. Shafer also discovers partisan differences like Baer. Shafer finds a larger ambition gap within the Republican Party than Democratic Party respondents. Like the work by Lawless and Fox, we are plagued with a bit of a chicken or the egg problem. Is ambition a function of environmental cues and factors created by party leaders? Or does one’s political ambition create the environment? Based on Lawless and Fox’s 2010 work, party leaders have a role to play in reversing the effects of socialization that has depressed women’s political ambition. One underlying effect does seem to remain clear in the political ambition work: gender is a significant variable in terms of who is asked to run for elective office.

Offering a new take on an old question, Kanthak and Woon’s (2014) new work suggests that women are election averse. In a laboratory setting, undergraduate students were randomly grouped and asked to complete a mathematical task, in which they were compensated for correct work. In another phase of the experiment, the researchers asked

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<sup>4</sup> Baer also found differences between the two major parties. The Republican Party did not fare as well in terms of recruiting women to the party or to public office. Baer finds this striking giving the recent nomination of Governor Palin and the TEA Party leadership of Congresswoman Michele Bachmann.

for a volunteer to represent the group, of which men and women volunteered at nearly equal rates. At this point, part of the compensation for each group member rested on the performance of the volunteer. In the last phase of the experiment, the researchers asked that the groups elect a leader to represent them after a short campaign speech by the candidates. A gender gap emerged for the group to elect its leaders rather than have the group led by a volunteer. Kanthak and Woon (2014) found that 78 percent of men chose to run, but only 60 percent of the women. The authors are clear to point out that the women are not risk averse, as they are choosing to lead on a volunteer basis at about the same rates as their male colleagues. Rather, the women are election averse.

This new work by Kanthak and Woon (2014) runs a bit counter to the studies that that women lack political ambition (Fox and Lawless 2004), yet simultaneously supports Carroll and Sanbonmatsu's (2013) identification of a "relationally embedded decision" for candidates. Kanthak and Woon (2014) frame their subjects choices in terms of strategy and Carroll and Sanbonmatsu (2013) argue that "women's decision making about office holding is more likely to be influenced by the beliefs and reactions, both real and perceived, of other people and to involve considerations of how candidacy and office holding would affect the lives of others with whom the potential candidate has close relationships" (45). In sum, it is possible that the subjects in Kanthak and Woon's (2014) experiment were considering others when choosing to not to run for election; it is a theory that certainly has merits and might help explain the gender gap between volunteering and campaigning. What we have learned from Lawless and Fox's (2010) work is that a political intervention could help increase women's candidacies. Political

elites could help potential candidates understand the impact of a decision to run as well as the probability of success.

In an attempt to learn about what role political elites and their organizations play in perpetuating the underrepresentation of women in government, David Niven (1998) surveyed four states'<sup>5</sup> county party chairs and locally elected women to determine if there was a male selection bias in the chairs' recruitment efforts. Niven found that there was evidence of an in-group preference where the predominantly male party chairs favored masculine traits from occupations to personalities. When party chairs were asked who the potential candidates were for the next legislative campaign, they responded by naming twice as many men as women. With regards to gatekeeping, of the women officeholders surveyed, 64% said that party leaders actively discouraged their candidacy (1998). Barbara Burrell's research (1993) coined the term "selectorate" to refer to party members involved at some stage in shortlisting candidates (291), but from Niven's research we learn that the selectorate can also exist on the local level, which impacts the pipeline of women candidates.

Dr. Sanbonmatsu (2006) in her *Where Women Run* book investigated the role political parties play in the candidate recruitment process for state legislatures across six states<sup>6</sup> by interviewing and surveying party leaders. The party leaders' responses were as diverse as the states studied, but there were some patterns that emerged. Like Niven, Sanbonmatsu found the "selectorate" recruiting candidates who belonged to the recruiters'

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<sup>5</sup> Niven surveyed the county chairs of NJ, CA, OH, and TN.

<sup>6</sup> The six states included in Dr. Sanbonmatsu's (2006) study included: OH, AL, NC, MA, CO, and IA.

own personal network. Sanbonmatsu also confirmed the correlation that women were less likely to run in states that have strong parties. Sanbonmatsu (2006) writes:

More closed, selective processes whereby parties seek to limit candidate entry or party leaders coalesce behind one primary candidate do not appear to facilitate women's representation. Instead, women appear to be better off when they can take the case for their candidacy directly to voters in the primary. A decentralized recruitment process also provides the opportunity for interest groups as well as parties to encourage women to run (188).

When parties are strong, women tend to be ignored while men are actively recruited and endorsed. Therefore, when parties are weak, other interest groups and organizations are better able to participate in the candidate recruitment process. It is from these outside organizations, which often do not have a long history of gendered segregation that we see women candidates emerge.

More recently, however, in a dissertation completed by Melody Crowder-Meyer (2010), the researcher finds that strong, active, and structured parties run more female candidates than weak parties. Crowder-Meyer, through a national survey of local<sup>7</sup> party chairs, found this pattern to be even more pronounced in the Democratic Party than Republican Party when women led the local parties. Crowder-Meyer (2010) also found that parties that worked with non-party groups such as community groups, volunteer organization, and outside interest groups, ran more female candidates, as women are more likely to participate in many types of non-party groups than political party organizations. This latter observation does seem to fit with previous conclusions by other authors (Freeman 2000; Sanbonmatsu 2006) in that interest groups, especially women's organizations, can play an active role in candidate recruitment. That being said,

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<sup>7</sup> The use of the term local in the Crowder-Meyer dissertation refers to county-level political parties and elective offices.



Sanbonmatsu found that interest groups often worked “in place of” the party system as opposed to working in tandem with the parties as Crowder-Meyer’s work suggests.

Crowder-Meyer’s dissertation (2010) argued that strong, structured parties with female leaders work with outside interest groups to recruit women as candidates. She found that neither party is more likely to run a woman when they believe they are going to lose (Crowder-Meyer 2010, 252-253). However, in Crowder-Meyer’s (2013) newer article in *Politics & Gender* expanded her thesis on how political party recruitment impacts women’s representation. Her article draws upon the national survey she prepared for her dissertation research and offered some clarity on the effect different processes have on candidate recruitment. The thesis can be summed in one of her observations: “Party leaders who look for candidates using traditional party member and officeholder networks will be more likely to find male candidates, while those who look beyond the party in sub-county offices and social networks of party members will be more likely to find female candidates” (Crowder-Meyer 2013, 409).

Crowder-Meyer’s research led her to argue that strong political parties have a role to play in recruiting women candidates and therefore increasing women’s representation; however, such recruitment of women candidates is dependent upon the scope of the recruitment efforts. The more likely the party leader utilizes outside interest groups to identify potential candidates the more likely the candidate pool will be more diverse. She also finds a gendered pattern in terms of who is recruiting women candidates. Crowder-Meyer (2013) indicates that women party leaders are more likely to seek women candidates, yet there are too few women party leaders for seismic change to take place.

Given the differing observations made by multiple scholars on the impact of weak and strong parties on women's recruitment to become candidates denotes that this is an area of research needing further inquiry. Furthermore, few scholars have gone on to study candidate recruitment practices beyond the federal and state level. Thus, this dissertation seeks to close the gap in women and political party research by focusing on the local level.

### The Case for Women in Politics

Is there something amiss in that women are not found in the legislature equal to that of their population? The short, normative answer is yes. For America's notion of self-governance, as well as democratic legitimacy, it is important that *people* are present in government (Pitkin, 1967, 235). For a democracy to flourish, *who* represents is as important as *how* they represent. The underrepresentation of women, as well as other minorities, negatively affects the legitimacy and responsiveness of "representative" democracies. As part of this dissertation, an argument to increase descriptive representation of women will be presented. I argue that there is a relationship between descriptive representation, substantive representation, and validity for America's democratic values. It is from this standpoint that I approach and understand the debate surrounding descriptive representation. Additionally, one will find a strong case both normatively and positively to increase women's descriptive representation in this section.

The U.S. legislature is predominantly Anglo, like the U.S. population, and male, *unlike* the U.S. population. According to theorist Hanna Pitkin (1967) to represent means "making present again" (9). "Representation taken generally means the making present in some sense of something which is nevertheless not present literally or in fact" (Pitkin,

1967, 9). For Pitkin, to represent something/someone means that the representative is taking action on behalf of their constituency. Pitkin defines representatives that “stand for” as a “virtue of a correspondence or connection between them, a resemblance or reflection” (61). Thus, her understanding of representatives that “stand for” their constituency is dependent on the way the representative looks. Moreover, Pitkin’s framework leads to the notion that representatives can “stand for” their constituents often times by embodying phenotypic traits.

Given that bodies are raced, gendered, classed, and sexualized it is conceivable that those bodies have a shared lived experience. While being a woman is not a monolithic experience due to race, class, etc., one is still a woman and must navigate the world through that lens, as that is how the world views her. Thus, the lived experience often times does translate as a shortcut as to how the representative will behave legislatively. The translation of that experience into representation advances the concept of “substantive representation” – the *action* on behalf of that represented group. For me, and other researchers (Dovi 2002, 730), we push Pitkin’s logic to argue that democratic accountability sometimes *requires* descriptive representation. Descriptive representation and substantive representation are not mutually exclusive and often times it is descriptive representation that is a signifier of substantive representation. I argue that there is a relationship between descriptive representation, substantive representation, and validity for America’s democratic values. It is from this standpoint that I approach this theoretical debate around the status of women in American politics.

In addition to the normative, democratic arguments for an increase in the descriptive representation of women in America’s legislative bodies, data suggests that

when women are elected they impact the policymaking process as well as its outcomes differently than their male colleagues (Dodson and Carroll 1991; Kathlene 2001; Dodson 2006; Swers 2002). Specifically, we learned from the research of Rosenthal (1998) and Whicker and Jewell's (1998) work on women in state legislatures that women tend to increase bi-partisan collaboration and build consensus rather than competition.

Women legislators are also known to "represent" women outside of their geographic district boundaries as well – a phenomenon coined as "surrogate representation" (Mansbridge 1999; Carroll 2000). Researchers at the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University conducted 77 in-depth interviews with Congresswomen over the 103<sup>rd</sup> and 104<sup>th</sup> Congresses. Throughout those interviews congresswomen continually acknowledged the responsibility they felt to women outside of their electoral districts to represent shared interests (Carroll 2000). Much of this stemmed from a shared, gendered life experience as women. While surrogate representatives need not be descriptive representatives, the work by CAWP demonstrates a link between descriptive and substantive representation by way of surrogacy. In sum, when women are present they lead with a different style. Therefore, it is not a surprise to learn that research has also found that by leading with a different style and voice, women legislators impact policy outcomes.

In *The Impact of Women in Public Office*, Carroll (2001) calls upon the work of multiple scholars who demonstrate the importance of gender diversity in state and local governments as it informs public policy. Using her own research to begin the book, Carroll uses data collected from the pool of state legislators in 1988 to investigate the following areas: perceptions of women legislators' difference making, gender differences

on women's rights bills, and gender differences in legislative priorities. While all are of interest, for the sake of this discussion we will delve deeper into Carroll's findings on legislative priorities. After surveying 928 state legislators on "the one bill had been her or his personal top priority for the current legislative session" Carroll (2001) found that the women were more likely than the men to state that their priority was a bill that focuses on women as their top priority (8). That being said, a bill focusing on "women" has a wide definition that includes domestic violence, abortion, childcare, parental leave, and equal rights.

Women legislators representing both chambers showed a difference in taking up health care as a legislative priority in comparison to their male colleagues (9). Perhaps the most telling narrative that comes from this research is when Carroll adds personal characteristics like party identification, ideology, feminist ideology, and race to the equation of support for women's rights legislation. In sum, Carroll (2001) finds that in comparison to men, women in every category were more likely to have worked for women's rights (13). For example, Republican women were more likely than Republican men to support women's rights legislation, non-feminist women were more likely than non-feminist men to support women's rights legislation and so on.

Since 1980 political scientists have been articulating a gender gap in the mass electorate on public policy, party identification, and presidential vote choice (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986; Carroll 1988; Sapiro and Conover 1997; Kaufman and Petrocik 1999; Kaufmann 2002; Box-Steffensmeier, De Boef, and Lin 2004; CAWP 2013c). Since 1980 women in the electorate have been found to be more likely to register in the Democratic Party, support the Democratic presidential nominee, and favor more "liberal" stances on

“women’s issues,” social welfare policy, gun control, war, and issues impacting families. Therefore, it is expected and found that women representatives are more likely to advocate on behalf of women, children, families, seniors, etc. (Swers 2002; Dodson and Carroll 1991; Carroll 2001) and of the women elected to Congress – most identify with the Democratic Party. Given these data points alone we see that there is a correlation between descriptive representation and substantive representation; yet research finds even stronger evidence for the role of gender and experience in policymaking.

From work by Dr. Swers (2002) studying bill sponsorship and co-sponsorship in the 103<sup>rd</sup> and 104<sup>th</sup> Congresses we know that women representatives, regardless of political party affiliation, are more likely to support “women’s issues<sup>8</sup>” (Swers 2002). Swers’ research also revealed that congresswomen are more likely to use their committee positions to advocate for women’s issues in comparison to their male colleagues (Swers 2002, 95). Additionally, she found that both Republican and Democratic women are more likely to offer feminist amendments than their male colleagues. However, there was one policy area where that of party overshadowed the impact of gender, and that was on social welfare amendments (Swers 2002, 96).

In addition to gendered policy preferences, it is important to note that the institution, whether it is the U.S. Congress or state legislature, itself is gendered – from its physical space to procedural rulings. Lyn Kathlene (2001) takes up the investigation of men and women’s approaches to policymaking in the Colorado state legislature in 1989.

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<sup>8</sup> “Women’s issues” are defined as issues that are particularly salient to women because they seek to achieve equality for women; they address women’s special needs, such as women’s health concerns or child care; or they confront issues with which women have traditionally been concerned in their role as caregivers, such as education or the protection of children (Swers 2002, 10).

Kathlene hypothesized that male legislators would be more “instrumental” in their approach and women more “contextual.” Moreover, Kathlene tested the notion of these types as well as their consequences for policymaking. She defined the two as: to be instrumental is to be autonomous, interactions are competitive, separation of private and public spheres, favoring object knowledge, and focusing on protecting individual rights; and to be contextual means viewing oneself in connection with others, interactions are relational, views the public and private spheres as overlapping, objective and subject knowledge are desired, and the main focus is on addressing the needs of the community (Kathlene 2001, 29).

Kathlene (2001) relied upon interviews to collect her data and through that she was able to find subtle, yet important differences. Differences included language describing policy solutions to crime: male legislators favored the legal system and women legislators’ acts focused more on changing the relationship of the criminal with society (Kathlene 2001, 37). These approaches also had legislative consequences as male crime bills passed the legislature at a rate of 83% and women’s only 37% of the time (Kathlene 2001, 38). Party identification did not seem to impact the results of the study. Rather, it was the gender of the legislator that predicted the type of approach one would take on legislation. This highlights gendered difference in terms of legislative process, policy, and outcomes.

In sum, differences between male and female representatives are as actualized as those in the mass electorate. Therefore, in order for America to be a representative democracy, its governing institutions should descriptively and thereby substantively reflect the electorate. While there can be a strong normative case made for the increased

descriptive representation of women in legislative bodies, the qualitative and quantitative data demonstrate that gender diversity impacts policy as well as the policymaking process.

### Political Parties Matter

Scholars have been debating what constitutes a political party and what does *not* for as long as political factions have been developing. How one chooses to define a political party impacts its overall measurement. Moreover, how the scholar views the relationship of parties' responsiveness to the electorate, officeholders, and policy demanders is often what defines the political party. Another important debate in political party literature is whether or not political parties are strong. The deliberation over strong versus weak parties is important as there are consequences for democracy, candidates, and the electorate when parties lean in either direction.

Previous research has found compelling evidence that strong party systems yield fewer women officeholders (Niven 1998; Sanbonmatsu 2006), yet other scholars see the promise of a strong party system for women candidates (Burrell 1993; Crowder-Meyer 2010). Thus, for scholars who see the importance of having more women in elective office, political parties are a compelling variable in this puzzle to study. This section will offer the reader a primer on different definitions of a party organization as well as whether the state of American political parties are strong and why these discussions matter for this dissertation project.

One work by party scholar Denise Baer (1992) titled "Who Has the Body? Party Institutionalization and Theories of Party Organization" articulates four competing theories of party organization: the Party-in-the-Electorate (PIE), the Office Nuclei model



(Schlesinger 1985), the Truncated Party model, and the Party Institutionalization model. The PIE theory is one where the strength of the organization lies with its identification and resonance at the level of the masses. However, with the advent of Progressive Era changes from a patronage to civil service system, scholars noted a decline in party identification; therefore, leading to new theories that the more contemporary party organization is/was on the decline in the electorate. For example, work conducted by Cotter et al. (1984) found much of the PIE theory to be irrelevant for today's party organization. Additionally, Cotter et al. (1984) found tremendous vitality and strength at the local level even as patronage systems declined and masses began to identify at increasing rates as Independents. I will not utilize this theory due to strong arguments against it and insufficient evidence.

The office nuclei theory, championed by Schlesinger (1985), is centered around the party organization being born out of competitive races. Schlesinger argues that when competition between the parties for elective offices increases, party organizations are strengthened out of necessity to wage a campaign for those contested offices. Schlesinger (1985) builds his theory upon historical changes to the political opportunity structure offered by the Progressive Era and Civil Rights Movements, but fails to drill down to the local level. For Schlesinger, increased inter-party competition is an integral component of this theory. Schlesinger articulates that the formal party organization is just one facet of the party and that others include the officeholders, volunteers, voters, and other activists who participate in the organization (Cohen et al. 2008, 24). A positive aspect of this theory is that it is not in conflict with candidate-centered elections, which have been on the rise as party identification in the electorate have been on the decline.

Thirdly, the Truncated Party model is one that stresses the roles of elites' needs. Therefore, the parties become their own unique culture based upon elite demands and structure. At the heart of the Truncated Party model theory is that it is hierarchical in nature, created and maintained to service office seekers. This type of theory is quite narrow and negates the role of policy demanders within the organization. While this theory has strengthened with an increase in candidate-centered politics, it does not allow for the party organization to be elastic.

Lastly, the Party Institutionalization Model (Baer 1992) consists of four inter-related phenomena: organizational vitality (e.g. stable headquarters), organizational interdependence between state, local, and national organizations, stable linkage and communication between elites and non-elites, and integrative community life (i.e. solidary benefits to its members) (Baer 1992, 22). This model allows for more opportunities for both elites and non-elites to participate. In order to measure party strength, identifying a brick and mortar operation can be a heuristic to community volunteers that this organization can be and is a leader. The challenge with this theory is that it lacks explanation of the role of policy demanders and coalitions.

Scholars Cohen et al. (2008) offers a wonderful review of many competing definitions of political parties as well as their own view of contemporary party organizations. The authors' view is based on the idea that parties are the products of interest groups, activists, and others whom they call "intense policy demanders." They believe that these actors organize parties in order to get the public policy they prefer (Cohen et al. 2008, 20). They also see key differences between the candidate-centered party and the group-centered party, which leads them to test those differences. They

argue that if the politician is the center of the party, then you should be able to trace the origins of parties to incumbents. If the party is group-centered, then the policy changes enacted can be traced back to the groups. While investigating the root of the party organization, the researchers needed to test their question over time to see how the party organization responded. They argue that parties have endured changes from the reform era exemplified by presidential nominating conventions.

While the party control has moved from smoke-filled back rooms into the light of day via primary elections, this does not necessarily mean that parties are not influencing those campaigns and outcomes. The scholars make a profound observation that simply because the power of the nomination has shifted to groups or activists, does not necessarily mean that the party is weaker (Cohen et al. 2008, 96). Overall, Cohen et al. (2008) offer a compelling argument that expanding the definition of party to include policy demanders in no way indicates a decrease in party strength – as they are an important part of the organization.

In similar fashion to Cohen et al. (2008), whom tests the strength of party organization over a period of change, scholars Masket (2009) and Trounstone (2008) observe that while primary actors may be different, the political behaviors may be eerily unchanged. The argument in Trounstone's (2008) book focuses on understanding the change in many cities' politics from a "machine" to that of a "monopoly" of reform officeholders. Trounstone (2008) offers evidence that the coalitions may be different, but yet they both have the effect of eliminating "effective competition" (2). She argues that office seekers aim to secure reelection by eliminating their competition, thereby creating a monopoly over government. Trounstone (2008) does offer a difference between a

monopoly and machine, which is that a machine relies upon patronage for votes while simultaneously suppressing the opposition (25). A monopoly is more favorable in her mind as she articulates that the monopoly is highly organized and will often create institutional rules that benefit incumbents, all within the parameters of a democracy. For Trounstine (2008), while the players and policies may be different, the incumbency advantage is constant whether it is on the reform or machine side – both can produce monopolies.

Masket (2009) argues that “informal party organizations” are at the heart of contemporary political parties and today’s legislative polarization. Masket (2009) claims that the party organizations are able to control the public behavior of their officeholders by proactively acting as gatekeepers to political office (9). In practice, this means that the strength of the political organization lies within its nomination and recruitment practices. Based upon his premise, he argues that party organizations are strong, as he believes that it is nearly impossible to win the nomination of a major political party without the backing of local informal party organizations. Masket articulates an “invisible primary” within the informal party organizations as the activists within this loosely held together network are those who offer resources to candidates and articulate endorsements. Therefore, the office seeker is taking cues from the informal party organization (IPO) on how to behave and the primary voter is also receiving cues from the informal party organization about candidate viability. As a result of the control of this nomination process, the politicians that make it through the process reflect the ideological activists that brought them to victory -- hence polarized politics (Masket 2009, 19). Masket views

these organizations different than past party machines because he argues that machines did not care for ideology.

One challenge to Masket's theory though rests with the notion that the IPOs are in conflict with traditional party organizations. Given that machines have been on the decline, it seems possible that activists simply inserted themselves into openings of the old organization. Similar to Trounstine's observation about similar political phenomena occurring from machines to reform monopolies. IPOs may be taking the place of traditional party organizations, yet with the same type of outcome, an exclusive monopoly. Instead of patronage by way of jobs, the party seeks patronage by way of policy.

Most recently Kathleen Bawn and scholars (2012) in their *Perspective on Politics* piece argued "parties in the United States are best understood as coalitions of interest groups and activists seeking to capture and use government for their particular goals, which range from material self-interest to high-minded idealism" (571). The authors stipulate that their theory "cede[s] little policy to voters" and argues that "parties mainly push their own agendas and aim to get voters to go along" (572). In this view of parties, legislative leaders are not at the center, rather it is interest groups and activists acting outside of the legislature to form coalitions are what nominate candidates committed to their ideas. This works in parallel with Masket's IPOs in that it is the parties that are choosing the candidates through their own process and then and only then do voters have an opportunity to weigh in. Policy demanders can be a part of the formal party structure and exercise their interests through identifying, recruiting, and nominating candidates that represent their ideals. In total, the more recent works are coalescing around one idea that

is important for this dissertation, which is that political parties are strong. Earlier theories that place the legislator/candidate at the center are on the wane. Researchers are offering more evidence that even if candidates/legislators must create their own campaigns; the campaigns are won only after they appeal to nominators and gatekeepers.

### The Party and Female Candidates

Researchers have found political parties to be advantageous to women seeking elective office (Crowder-Meyer 2010) as well as disadvantageous (Niven 1998; Sanbonmatsu 2006; Niven 2006; Fox and Lawless 2010). However, few would argue that parties do not matter at all. We learned from Sanbonmatsu, Carroll, and Walsh's (2009) report, *Poised to Run*, that parties are important for female candidacies. Parties are essential in helping encourage and mentor potential candidates as well as act as gatekeepers – deterring others from running. Weak or strong, the party as an apparatus with material and human resources is an important variable and a focus of this study. Although there is a larger debate happening amongst American politics scholars, a deeper focus and energy on parties in women and politics scholarship is needed to better understand the paucity of female representation.

Strong parties are active, influential in the primary process, and can offer or withhold resources to candidates. There is an ongoing debate within the women and politics literature as to how strong or weak parties affect female candidacies. The line of inquiry as to the impact of strong or weak parties has been investigated at the national, state, and local levels. As the research has offered insight at the different levels of office, there have also been differing results. Niven (1998; 2006) and Sanbonmatsu's (2006) work at the state level find

patterns of strong parties working against the recruitment of female candidates. Niven's<sup>9</sup> (1998) work on county parties also found a recruitment bias that favored males while Crowder-Meyer's (2010) recent scholarship on local parties offers support for the notion that strong parties are indeed helpful towards recruiting women as candidates.

When parties are strong, women tend to not be recruited at the rates that men are recruited. Therefore, when parties are weak, other interest groups and organizations are better able to participate in the candidate recruitment process (Crowder-Meyer 2013). It is from these outside organizations, which do not have a long history of gendered segregation, that we see women candidates emerge. Similar to Sanbonmatsu's 2006 work, Niven (2006) published an article focused on negative recruitment at the state legislative level. Unlike Sanbonmatsu, who surveyed and interviewed party leaders from six states, Niven's 2006 study used Florida as a case study.

Niven (2006) studied the drop out rate of candidates in Florida's state legislative races in 2000 and 2002. Niven wanted to know why candidates were dropping out of their races and under what circumstances. Are female candidates more likely to drop out than male candidates? Do women drop out of their races more often when their party is strong? The data Niven (2006) collected identified a strong pattern with regards to gender, party strength, and drop out rates. To begin, he found that women were no more likely to drop out of their legislative races than men. However, women were disproportionately more likely to drop out of races where their party was strong (Niven 2006, 473). Men, on the other hand, were more likely to drop out when their party was not going to win, perhaps when the party was weak (Niven 2006, 482). Why this divergent path? Survey results suggested that, "men receive

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<sup>9</sup> Niven's 1998 work on candidate recruitment did not include measures of party strength.

encouragement from political elites to run in favorable districts and discouragement from political elites to run in unfavorable districts. Women receive the opposite messages. Moreover, women report being more apt to value the input they receive from political elites” (486). Like Sanbonmatsu’s work, Niven’s research finds strong parties to be a negative apparatus to advancing gender parity in state legislatures.

As noted earlier, there are two camps for those who study women and political parties: the belief that strong parties negatively impact female candidacies and representation (Sanbonmatsu 2006; Niven 2006) and the other that states political parties can be (and are) positive actors in recruiting women candidates, which positively impacts female descriptive representation (Crowder-Meyer 2010). There is data to support both schools of thought, which is an indicator that there is room for growth in this debate.

### All Politics Is Local

Given the strong case to study women’s recruitment by political parties as an important variable in unraveling the puzzle of women’s underrepresentation, one area is left to be explained: why examine this puzzle at the local/county level? Two primary reasons undergird the driving force behind choosing to study local/county politics: 1) The assumption that local politics provides women with a great springboard to a political career, and 2) Research on local/county politics is undergoing resurgence in political science. While local politics was studied more heavily decades ago, it is exhibiting resurgence with the helps of scholars like Seth Masket and Jessica Trounstine.

Given that there are 89,004 local governments according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012b), it seems fitting that there are many opportunities for women and men to learn how to govern at the local level and ascend to state and federal governments.



However, simply because women are holding office at local governments at slightly higher rates than the federal level in no way means that women are present in local governments at a desired level (Dolan, Deckman, Swers 2007). Thus, studying candidate recruitment at the local level is still a largely underdeveloped area in political science – a void this dissertation seeks to fill.

Although there is the assumption that women are engaging elective office at the local level<sup>10</sup>, surprisingly, political scientists have yet to fully turn their attention to this level of governance. That being said, it is understandable why scholars have shied away from such studying local politics. For example, local politics is well known to be a serious challenge to study as each county and municipal governments adhere to their own record-keeping practices. Therefore, lack of uniform data keeping by municipal and county governments can cause many roadblocks for information seekers, causing researchers to focus on state and federal governments where they can source reliable data.

### Why Pennsylvania?

This dissertation uses the county party of Pennsylvania as the unit of analysis. Pennsylvania is a diverse state with two major urban centers<sup>11</sup>, a substantial rural community, and a diverse economy. Additionally, I am not the first to rely upon Pennsylvania to be used in a political science inquiry. Scholars Raisa Deber (1982) and Susan Hansen (1994) have used Pennsylvania as a case study as to why there is such low female representation in the state. While there are concerns of generalities with case studies, I argue that the benefits outweigh the negatives. For example, Pennsylvania is

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<sup>10</sup> Local office is defined as any elective office that is below the state level, such as: serving in county governments, school boards, town councils, etc.

<sup>11</sup> The two major urban centers are Pittsburgh and Philadelphia as they are the largest cities in the state.

known to have a professional, full-time legislature with strong parties and few women state legislators.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania contains many of the variables one would suspect in a low female representation state<sup>12</sup> (NCSL 2012). While generalizability is an important feature of social science research, I argue that it is also important to know a great deal about each individual state's relationship to female representation if there is to be an increase/change. After all, if states are viewed as laboratories for leadership with the narrative that governors springboard to the presidency and state legislators springboard to Congress; it is important to know what is occurring within each state<sup>13</sup> in order to increase women's representation not only in Pennsylvania, but in states with similar political institutions. It is important to acknowledge that I am using the state legislature as a heuristic for political culture as so few studies focus on the local/county level. Therefore, while I am investigating the county as a unit of analysis, the choice – the need to study Pennsylvania does come from observations made at the state level.

Currently, no women serve as part of Pennsylvania's twenty-member congressional delegation to the 114<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress. In total, there have only been seven women ever to serve Pennsylvania's congressional delegation; and three of the seven<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The NCSL identifies four states that have full-time, professional legislatures: CA, MI, NY, and PA. Of those four, CA has the highest proportion of women in its state legislature at a rate of 25% – much higher than any of the other states.

<sup>13</sup> It is also important to acknowledge that I am investigating this research question as the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University. As the Executive Director of a non-partisan center dedicated to increasing women's public leadership at the elected and appointed levels it is imperative that the Center know what role political parties are playing in recruiting, gatekeeping local candidates.

<sup>14</sup> Pennsylvania has sent 1,081 members to the U.S. Congress since the inception of the U.S. Congress in 1789, yet only 7 have been women. (Calculated from the Library of

women were sent to the House of Representatives due to a vacancy caused by their husband's death<sup>15</sup> (CAWP 2013a). Pennsylvania has never elected a woman to the U.S. Senate or Governor's mansion. Of the sixteen cities in Pennsylvania with a population greater than 30,000, only three are currently being led by female mayors<sup>16</sup> (PCWP 2011). Moving to state elective office, we find that Pennsylvania currently ranks 39th of the 50 states in its proportion of women in the state legislature<sup>17</sup> (CAWP 2015c). Additionally, in 2012 the Commonwealth elected its first female Attorney General, Kathleen Kane. A quick look at county councils/commissioners finds that women do not fare much better there either. According to the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University, there are 32 counties of 67 without one woman serving on its legislative body (PCWP 2012). In sum, there are very few women that hold elective office in the state of Pennsylvania.

The politics, geography, and diversity of Pennsylvania make the state a solid case study with which to examine the role of gender in party politics. As mentioned at the outset, the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University ranks Pennsylvania 39th of the 50 states regarding the proportion of women in the state legislature. This information is generally surprising to most casual observers as many expect Pennsylvania to fare better with regards to women in elective office for a few reasons. Some expect Pennsylvania to be culturally more progressive due to its two

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Congress information link: <http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp>

<sup>15</sup> Women rising to elective office through a vacancy due to their husband's death is a primary way in which women rose to power until the 1970's when we see women running and winning in their own right (Gertzog 1999?)

<sup>16</sup> The three cities with female mayors as of 2011 were: Harrisburg, State College, and York.

<sup>17</sup> Pennsylvania has 9 female state senators of 50 and 36 female state representatives of 203 – approximately 17.8% of the body is female.

prominent cities, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh; yet outside of those two population centers the state is predominantly rural.

Casual observers may also expect Pennsylvania to be more progressive politically as its Electoral College votes for the past several presidential cycles have been cast for the Democratic candidate. The last time Pennsylvania's Electoral College votes were cast for a Republican was 1988 (270 to Win 2013). That being said, Pennsylvania is generally thought to be a swing state in presidential races as both Republican and Democratic nominees make frequent stops in the Keystone State. Additionally, in the most recent gubernatorial election, a Democratic challenger ousted the incumbent Republican Governor. This was a historic occasion as Pennsylvania had always re-elected its incumbents for a second term until 2014. But at the same time, the state's General Assembly became more conservative.

In sum, Pennsylvania is believed to be a swing state with great geographical diversity as well as diversity in its population. Considering the women and politics literature, Pennsylvania has many of the variables that women and politics scholars use to predict lower representation of women, such as a professional legislature, traditional political party structure, and support for traditional gender roles. An additional variable to consider is its actual geographical size. In light of Crowder-Meyer's arguments that strong parties benefit women at the local level, Pennsylvania boasting a historically "strong" party system represents a good test case.

Researchers have found that professional legislatures that are high paying tend to be more competitive and therefore more difficult for newcomers, such as women, to enter that political arena. Given that women are still relative newcomers to politics, incumbency and

party structures that have been, or are, involved in the nomination process have created a cyclical nature to the supply and demand of candidates favoring males. Regarding the institutional structure of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the Commonwealth has what is often called a “professional” legislature. A “professional” legislature is one that meets year round with a competitive salary. Pennsylvania is one of the higher paying legislatures, with members earning \$84,012/year, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL 2015). Another aspect of a “professionalized” state legislature is the length of its legislative sessions (NCSL 2012). The length of the legislative session is an important variable especially when it intersects with Pennsylvania’s vast landscape. For those individuals that consider time spent away from home and family, these offices are less appealing. Many women, according to the *Poised to Run* report (Sanbonmatsu, Carroll, and Walsh 2009), consider their family when making the decision to run for political office. If a woman has younger children or is of childbearing age, the likelihood of that woman running for office declines. This is not true for men.

Pennsylvania women are no different from women across America, as they feel the tug-of-war between their professional and personal lives and cite childcare duties as an obstacle to holding office, which I argue is further pronounced by Pennsylvania’s geography<sup>18</sup>. Depending upon where you live in Pennsylvania, the state capitol, which is in session year round, could be a five hour drive, requiring the representative or senator to stay in Harrisburg approximately four days a week. Although this dissertation will by and large be focused on local governments, the professional state legislature certainly impacts the culture

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<sup>18</sup> This is information I collected informally through my position as executive director of the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics and assistant professor of political science at Chatham University. This comment was also found in a few of the interviews conducted with county party chairs and vice-chairs.

of political parties and the political tenor of the state as a whole. In sum, Pennsylvania offers an interesting case in which to investigate the role of gender in political parties – both on the supply and the demand. Pennsylvania offers a researcher both urban and rural communities with a history of being a swing state.

### Research Question

Are strong county parties advantageous to women’s representation? This question is the driving force of this dissertation. In the introduction of the dissertation, an overview of the many ways in which to understand women’s underrepresentation in government bodies was provided. One area of research focuses on the demand side of the political parties that political parties are not recruiting female candidates; therefore, there are fewer women in the political arena. On the other hand, the supply side of the argument identifies women as being less politically ambitious and therefore not seeking candidacy at the same rate as their male counterparts. This dissertation focuses on the demand side of politics and tests whether Pennsylvania county party leaders are demanding women candidates. This dissertation tests the notion that strong county political parties are “good” for recruiting female candidates. Secondly, I test the notion that strong county parties act as gatekeepers. In addition to these tests, typologies of recruitment practices are identified.

To better understand the demand side of the equation -- scholars have investigated state, national, and most recently, county party recruitment and gatekeeping efforts (Crowder-Meyer 2010). Crowder-Meyer’s 2010 dissertation was one of the first to systematically research county level recruitment efforts, but it was conducted on a national scale. Therefore, it lacks the specificity that a one-state study may provide on the role of

county parties in recruitment. In order to gain a better understanding of the complexities of county party dynamics researchers should invest time and energy on case studies, which is what this dissertation accomplishes by focusing on Pennsylvania<sup>19</sup>.

### Definitions, Hypotheses, & Theory

To begin, I must first define what accounts for a political party in this dissertation. This task is both challenging and necessary. For this dissertation, I am defining the political party as a group of organized interests that are maintained in order to win public elections for the sake of implementing shared goals and policies (Schlesinger 1985; Bawn et al. 2012). Therefore, this definition includes party leaders, activists, and office seekers as the “party organization” that works together to win elections.

In this dissertation, candidate recruitment is defined as, “seeking out and encouraging candidates to run” (Sanbonmatsu 2006, 28). Given that a political party’s main goal is to seek and keep elective majorities, parties are in the practice of identifying and fielding candidates they believe best represent their interests and best chance at winning office. Gatekeeping is another term used frequently by political scientists to describe party activities. In this dissertation, gatekeeping means, “discouraging candidates from running or supporting one candidate in the primary” (Sanbonmatsu 2006, 28). Along the same lines as recruitment, the gatekeeping function of a political party seeks to advance their interests by winning elective office. Thus, for many in the women and politics field hearing party officials tell women to “wait their turn,” often comes up as a gatekeeping activity. However, that generally only

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<sup>19</sup> While case studies in American politics are rare, when conducted they identify patterns that can truly be highlighted through the use of the case study. A primary example is the work of David Niven (2006), which finds negative recruitment in the Florida party system for the state legislature.

comes with strength – that the party has the ability to “choose” amongst several candidates and feels comfortable having others sit on the sidelines.

In the case of Pennsylvania, I argue that strong political parties create a political culture of exclusivity. Therefore, political entrepreneurs are few and the party relies more on soft recruitment efforts to field candidates. *Soft* candidate recruitment is defined as political party officials identifying and encouraging potential candidates to run whom are already “favored” by party elites, thereby perpetuating the political culture of exclusivity. Soft recruitment tends to draw from men and women who are close with party officials, if they are not already party activists themselves. Sanbonmatsu (2006) begins to uncover some of these *informal* processes with her work across state parties in her book, *Where Women Run*, but does not drill down recruitment efforts to the county/local level. Many strong county parties may be able to articulate a process by which they may “recruit” candidates, but I anticipate that when delving deeper through qualitative research one may find that it is a shallow practice that is insular in its reach. The insularity practiced by the party organization and its leaders can be coupled with benevolent and hostile forms of discrimination as points of rationalization for the insularity (Glick and Fiske 2001).

Glick and Fiske (2001) define hostile discrimination as one that adheres to patriarchal dominance and is typified by negative, derogatory stereotypes of women. Examples of hostile sexism include sexual harassment and exclusion from tasks, and employment due to women’s believed inferiority. Benevolent discrimination, on the other hand, is one that is seen in the “woman’s best interest,” which allows it to be more widely accepted and pervasive. I expect to find benevolent sexism when conducting qualitative



research on the political party's recruitment of women candidates. I anticipate that when asking political party chairs and vice-chairs why there are so few women in Pennsylvania's elected bodies, many responses will be of the benevolent nature – that women are “too smart, too good” to engage in politics; that politics is viewed as a dirty business that only men are silly enough to engage in it – when the party is strong.

### Political Party Strength

What makes a party strong? For this dissertation the strength of the political party is intertwined with its ability to seek and compete for elective office, which stems from its grassroots, organizational activists, and coalitions. In short, a party organization is strong if the party is able to control the nomination process of its candidates (Masket 2011). While Masket uses this definition to advance his theory of informal party organizations (IPOs) it is not too far afield from the traditional party organization that also controlled the process of candidate emergence. He writes:

By serving as the gatekeeper to party nominations, IPOs ensure that only the sorts of people they like – people who will vote in a certain ideological fashion or will provide particular benefits to their backers – will be able to serve in government. And once the IPO has filled the local, state, and federal offices in its region with supportive politicians, it can fulfill the desires of its participating members: patronage jobs, construction projects, preferential regulatory or tax policies, and so forth (Masket 2011, 49).

In his own research Masket (2011) identifies candidate emergence in the following way: “The vast majority of successful candidates enter politics through an established political organization and work their way up within it” (158). I agree with his observation and argue that because of the type of nomination process he outlines, the system of candidate emergence is inherently gendered given the historical, patriarchal roots of the Pennsylvania party system. While the traditional party organization across

America has been on the decline since the Progressive Era and party realignment of the 1960s, much has stayed the same.

County party strength derives a portion of its power from voter registration. If a party has a monopoly on voter registration and the November ballot box, then that affords the party to grab for power in the primary campaign as the interparty competition does not exist for the general election. Strong county parties will engage in soft recruitment efforts. They will passively identify potential candidates from a pool that is tangential to the organization. Unlike weak parties that may be forced to cast a wide net, strong parties will look within the organization and those tangentially related to it potentially creating a dearth of female candidates. The weak parties will engage in hard recruitment efforts that may include, but not exclusive: advertisements in local newspapers, and/or asks from party officials to non-party or group related individuals in the community.

Crowder-Meyer's (2013) most recent work demonstrates these mass appeals to recruit candidates are gendered in that they play upon individuals' political ambitions, which we know are gendered from Lawless and Fox's (2010) work. So, while these mass appeals are gendered where they negatively impact female candidate emergence, a part of those hard recruitment efforts are outreach to nontraditional organizations, which may increase female candidate emergence (Crowder-Meyer 2013). In sum, strong parties will be identified as those who control nomination practices, offer candidate services, have institutional commitments, and participate in candidate recruitment efforts, specifically soft recruitment efforts.

In this dissertation the following hypotheses will be tested:

H1: Strong county parties will correlate with fewer women holding countywide office.

H2: Strong county parties will articulate soft (insular) recruitment efforts.

H3: Weak county parties will articulate hard (external) recruitment efforts.

H4: County party leaders will explain the paucity of women in PA politics in terms of benevolent sexism.

### Data & Methods

Like Crowder-Meyer (2010; 2013) and Sanbonmatsu (2006) I believe that political parties have gendered recruitment and gatekeeping practices that negatively impacts female candidate emergence and officeholding. In order to identify these processes and attitudes, as well as their consequences on female representation, I have collected and analyzed data using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

To begin, in order to use Pennsylvania as a case study for this dissertation, I first had to engage in a data collection project. Other than the Center for American Women and Politics' count of female state legislators and the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University's<sup>20</sup> count of female mayors for cities with a population of 30,000 or greater and the number of women on county legislative bodies, we knew very little about women running for elective office in the state of Pennsylvania. Assuming that "when women run, women win," it is important to determine that status of women officeholding in the state of Pennsylvania.

I collected local officeholding data to determine if a statistical relationship exists between party strength and female local officeholding. If Crowder-Meyer's work is accurate we should expect more women to hold county office from strong parties<sup>21</sup>. I rely

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<sup>20</sup>I supervise the data collection at the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics.

<sup>21</sup> One aspect of this correlation not challenged is that strong parties could be located in places with denser populations and we know that women tend to come from areas more

upon data collected by the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University to determine how many women are holding countywide office and where are they located. As scholars Lublin and Brewer (2003) learned from their inquiry into officeholding in some southern states, women rarely held executive or law enforcement positions. They found that women dominated “process-oriented offices that entail making sure procedures are followed, and keeping track of forms and filing” (Lublin and Brewer (2003, 382). Simultaneously they found that women held few offices that were investigative or dealt with criminal justice as well executive positions with power (Lublin and Brewer 2003, 383). Given the diversity of Pennsylvania both ideologically and geographically, Pennsylvania offers a good test case offering urban, suburban, and rural county governments. Another data collection project was undertaken in order to determine if there is a pattern of county officeholding in state legislators’ biographies.

Regarding the institution of the political party system in Pennsylvania, it is an important variable in understanding state politics. Historically, parties did not recruit women as candidates (Freeman 2000), and I predict that parties in Pennsylvania are still not actively recruiting women. We know from the 2008 Center for American Women and Politics Recruitment Study that recruitment is essential to increasing the descriptive representation of women at the state level: “Only about a quarter of women state representatives (26%) compared to nearly half of their male colleagues (43%) were self-starters” (8). Thus, it is essential to learn if Pennsylvania parties are recruiting female candidates at the same rate as male candidates. Moreover, the party system in Pennsylvania has a longstanding tradition of being highly institutionalized and structured,

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densely populated (“women-friendly” districts). Is it possible we are measuring a correlation between population and female candidate emergence?

so much so that the party hierarchy can be found even in the smallest of geographic spaces like city blocks.<sup>22</sup>

### Survey Research

As one who is studying women in Pennsylvania politics, it is crucial for me to identify which parties are strong or weak per county. Taking what CAWP has learned through their 2008 Recruitment Study, and Crowder-Meyer's (2010) research; if women need to be asked to run for the state legislature, in order to increase descriptive representation in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, one must be able to identify which counties are working to recruit women for local office. Quantitative research was chosen as a method to collect data across the Commonwealth in a uniform manner. One way to learn what recruitment processes exist at the county level is to ask the local party leaders to self-report how they identify their candidates. By administering a survey to the county party chairs and vice-chairs on recruitment practices and characteristics of "qualified" candidates I am able to account for what is taking place, and what is not.

In order to examine the "demand" side from the political party perspective I must research the role of county party chairs and vice-chairs in the candidate recruitment process. Second, I must identify what counties have strong parties and what counties have weak parties. Cross-tabs will be used to identify if there are perception differences between male and female party leaders and Democrats and Republicans from the survey. Lastly, I will conduct multivariate analysis in order to determine if strong party variables predict the presence of women elected officials<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Pennsylvania county parties require gender parity in leadership. If a woman is elected chair, then a man must be elected vice-chair and vice-versa.

<sup>23</sup> I will not be expecting any particular pattern to exist regarding partisan politics. I

### Qualitative Research

As part of that initial survey I offered respondents an opportunity to participate in a follow-up interview on candidate recruitment practices. The follow-up interview gave respondents an opportunity to explain more thoroughly their candidate recruitment practices. Of the 100 survey respondents, thirty chairs and vice-chairs participated in the follow-up interview. The thirty interviewees were all conducted via telephone between September 2012-March 2013. Of the 30 interviews, 18 were Democrats, 12 Republicans, and the gender breakdown was 14 women and 16 men. I was able to tape record all thirty interviews. The interviews lasted, on average, one half of an hour. The interview topics included: the party's role in recruitment; the activities of the county party; party assistance with candidates; observations on the role of gender in seeking election; what groups, if any, the party works with to identify candidates; and, observations as to why there are so few women in Pennsylvania politics.

The interviews are extremely important in understanding party elites' attitudes toward recruitment and more specifically what role gender plays, if any, in their local politics. The qualitative research method is used in this dissertation to augment the quantitative data. While the quantitative data can tell you *what* is happening on the ground it does not tell us *why* things are happening. Each county has a unique set of circumstances, so it is possible that some of the same recruitment efforts are creating

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am omitting this from my analysis, as the focus will be on strong versus weak. While Crowder-Meyer (2010, 22) found that women hold more Democratic county offices than Republican county offices (nationally) and that is of interest to do that with PA county party positions it would be too small of an N considering that most counties only have three commissioners (one of which is the "minority" commissioner). Therefore, this dissertation takes a broader look at all countywide positions (regardless of party affiliation).

different impacts and reactions due to the unique context each county brings. Therefore, it is important to allow the county party leaders an opportunity to more thoroughly explain their approach and challenges to recruitment efforts.

In order to make sense of these thirty interviews I relied upon an interpretative approach (Soss 2005). An interpretative approach can be understood as “making it a priority to encounter participants’ understandings on their own terms, which is not the same as accepting participants’ descriptions of the world” (Soss 2005, 133). The interpretative approach, as articulated by Soss (2005), is one that allows the researcher to remain analytical and not simply code and accept a respondent’s description on face value. Rather, researchers must make sense of statements contextually to give it meaning. Soss (2005) uses the example of his own dissertation work when interviewing welfare recipients. Soss (2005) encountered welfare recipients feeling “like a number.” However, simply because two people used the same turn of phrase did not necessarily carry the same meaning. In Soss’s (2005) example, the one respondent meant it in a positive way in that they were one of many in a program and not targeted or singled out. On the other hand, the same phrase was negative and they were articulating a need for individual attention. In this example, one can understand why simply coding similar phrases could be misunderstood.

By using an interpretative approach, I believe it is imperative that a researcher contextualizes the words to more accurately understand the respondent’s perspective. An additional advantage to utilizing an interpretive approach is that it requires the researcher to challenge assumptions and expectations of the interview subjects and responses. The interpretative approach demands that the researcher embed herself in the respondent’s

perspective and create the context necessary to most accurately portray the data (Adcock 2003). Moreover, the qualitative data helps construct the political reality on the ground for the party leader and ideally, the data also helps to understand what variables are used in that construction for that individual. In this dissertation work, I rely upon Soss's intentional interpretative approach to guide me through the thirty interviews I have conducted for this project.

### Contribution of Work

Throughout the decades political science has debated and measured the strength of party systems -- primarily at the national level. Some scholars have argued that the rise of visual media and voter-driven nomination process has created a politics that is candidate-centered (Wattenberg 1992). Others have noted a "resurgence" of parties as institutions with resources to share with candidates, therefore increasing the power of the party to play kingmaker. Most of the party strength literature has focused on federal elections, but as women and politics scholars investigate the paucity of women in elective office at all levels of government, the role of the party system is one that is ever present. By investigating the role of the local party in the candidate recruitment process I will contribute to women and politics, local politics literature, as well as the ongoing debate of the health of the party system.

### Layout of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I begin by reviewing the literature on the Pennsylvania political party system, and then I analyze the data from the County Party Leader Survey and describe the state of the county parties. In Chapter 3, I analyze the in-depth interviews conducted with county party chairs and vice-chairs to increase the knowledge of



candidate recruitment on the local level. In Chapter 4, I test the relationship between strong county parties and women's officeholding at the county level. In Chapter 5, I summarize my findings and articulate new research projects stemming from this dissertation.

*“Old-style political machines, with their armies of committeemen and party workers, prevail in many small towns and cities, as well as in the metropolitan centers of the state” – Frank J. Sorauf’s assessment of Pennsylvania electoral politics at the state assembly level (qtd. In Mayhew 1986, 56-57).*

## Chapter 2: Political Parties in Pennsylvania

To begin to understand the role that local political parties play in candidate recruitment and emergence I will review the historical role the Pennsylvania political party system has played in creating the state’s political environment. First, I will review the limited scholarly work that has measured the role and strength of Pennsylvania’s county party system and then describe its current state based upon the County Party Leader Survey I conducted for this dissertation. Second, I will define the parameters for a “strong party system” in Pennsylvania and explore the variation amongst the parties through the responses to the county party leader survey. By reviewing the parties’ literature, I will be able to explore the notion that Pennsylvania’s political parties are rooted in the traditional party organization (TPO) structure with a potential consequence of negatively impacting women’s representation on county bodies of government.

One of the identifiers of a party rooted in a traditional party organization is that of a gatekeeper. Parties are responsible for candidate recruitment and in some areas endorsement. Historically, the stronger the party the greater the gatekeeping and recruitment powers; hence, creating a pipeline of candidates that potentially could look more like the party gatekeepers’ networks than the district the candidate would actually represent as well as enacting policies more representative of the gatekeepers. Many of the dynamics of a strong party system in Pennsylvania will be explored through the

Pennsylvania County Party Leader Survey. As part of the survey results, variation across the state and between parties will also be considered.

### Chapter Goals

The thrust for the chapter is to describe the current status of the Pennsylvania county party system. I begin by reviewing historical work on the party system in Pennsylvania. Then I introduce my own survey on the county parties of Pennsylvania. Understanding where the party system was decades ago will inform its status of today. Thus, a goal of the chapter is to understand the role the county parties have played and currently play in candidate recruitment, candidate endorsement, and candidate services. Certainly, the more involved the party organization is in all of these functions the stronger the party is as an organization. The following research questions organize this chapter: What role, if any, does the county party organization and its leaders play in candidate recruitment? Does the county party organization endorse in the primary? How do county party leaders' perceptions of gender impact recruitment? Are the county parties as strong as they once were? What are the consequences of a strong county party on recruiting female candidates, if any? The survey conducted for this dissertation will respond to each of these questions. The analysis of the survey will be placed in a larger context with pre-existing political science literature on the subject matter.

### Pennsylvania as a Strong Party Organization State

Historically, political parties in Pennsylvania have been understood by political scientists and practitioners alike to be strong. To understand where that notion comes from, I draw heavily from David Mayhew's book *Placing Parties in American Politics: Organization, Electoral Settings, and Government Activity in the Twentieth Century*

(1986). Mayhew offers insight into the fundamental building block of political parties – the local organizations that are so often overlooked by political scientists.

Mayhew's (1986) work reviews political parties in the late 1960s and aims to identify a causal relationship between organizations and elite actors' actions in electoral politics and governmental activity<sup>24</sup>. For Mayhew the connection between elections and government output is the party organization itself, meaning that the party is held responsible for its governing policies on Election Day. He begins to make this connection by defining the traditional party organization (TPOs). TPOs have the following elements:

1. Substantial autonomy.
2. Longevity. It can survive leadership changes.
3. Hierarchical internal structure.
4. Nominates candidates.
5. It relies substantially on “material” incentives in order to engage people in organizational work. (Mayhew 1986, 19-20).

Mayhew then uses this definition to guide his measurement of party strength at the local level. Mayhew computes a score of one to five for each state, five indicating a very strong party system within that state. The state score is:

[A]n average of scores for each of its lower political units (counties) weighted appropriately according to population size and each contributory score for a lower unit registers the incidence and influence of TPOs in its own electoral politics: minimal scores for locales with no TPOs at all, somewhat higher scores for locales where TPOs have exercised decisive influence in nominating processes for some lower-level offices some of the time (and where that nominee won election), and on up to maximum scores for locales where TPOs have exercised decisive influence in nominating processes for major and minor offices year after year (pp. 21-23).

A strong TPO is one that has a leader, hierarchy, control of the party's nominations and therefore control of its county's or at least major city's government (48). Given these

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<sup>24</sup> This is much further than this dissertation aims to go, as the focus of this dissertation is solely on the candidate emergence process of electoral politics.

parameters, Pennsylvania earned a TPO score of 5, which is the maximum (Mayhew 1986, 64). The high score was given to the state's party system because it historically exercised decisive influence in nominating processes for major and minor offices year after year. Other states with TPO scores of 5: CT, MD, NJ, NY, RI, IL, IN. Mayhew sees PA's parties similar to that of NY and NJ. Like Mayhew I argue that much of the party structure is built upon its historical roots. It appears that the later the state became a part of the Union and more likely to be agreeable to Progressive Era changes, the lower the TPO score.

Mayhew built his case on Pennsylvania's party system on the seminal work of Frank Sorauf (1963), which focused completely on the state's 1950's politics. Mayhew and Sorauf observed that Pennsylvania's county parties were the epicenter of control for party nominations in a closed primary state (Mayhew 57, 1986). Mayhew draws upon Jesse Macy's 1908 study, *Party Organization and Machinery*, as supporting evidence. Macy argues that Pennsylvania's Republican organization was an especially elaborate structure, "the strongest, the most enduring, the most efficient of any similar organization for an entire State in the whole Union" (qtd. in Mayhew 1986 214). Mayhew followed Pennsylvania's party system through a few decades of change and still found them to a strong electoral force. In sum, Mayhew identified Pennsylvania's party structure as one that is very strong.

Similarly, Cotter et al. (1984) identified strong local parties from a survey of 7,300 county level party organizations between 1969-1980. For their work the central measurement was "party organizational strength." Cotter et al. explained their measurement in terms of organizational capacity: "Strong parties are organizationally

complex and have developed programmatic capacity. Organizational complexity requires an enduring headquarters operation with leadership, staff, and budget” (Cotter et al. 1984, 14). Therefore, when measuring the strength of a party organization, Cotter et al. (1984) gathered data on the following indicators: ability to fill key leadership positions<sup>25</sup>, election-period organizational maintenance<sup>26</sup>, formalization of structure<sup>27</sup>, non-election period organization maintenance<sup>28</sup>, continuity of structure in non-election periods<sup>29</sup>, and professional staffing<sup>30</sup> (Cotter et al. 1984, 184-185). Additionally, the researchers created indices of the following local party activities in order to capture the variation of services: coordination with candidates’ campaigns, candidate recruitment, campaign activity, patronage, pre-primary endorsements, and electoral effectiveness of precinct-level organization (Cotter et al. 1984, 185).

From Cotter et al.’s (1984) survey research they found that while there was not consistent professional bureaucratic leadership amongst the county parties, they did learn that there was volunteer leadership that was continuous and consistent along with campaign headquarters and most had by-laws or a constitution (45). Structurally, the county party organizations were sound. When comparing scores of county party

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<sup>25</sup> Ability to fill key leadership positions is defined as whether the county level organization has a complete set of officers and whether or not at least 90% of the precinct chairs were filled (Cotter et al. 1984, 183).

<sup>26</sup> Election period organizational maintenance is measured by whether the chair spends at least six hours per week on party business and whether the county level committee meets at least twice a month during election season (Cotter et al. 1984, 183).

<sup>27</sup> Formalization of structure is measured by whether or not the local party organization has a constitution, by-laws, etc. and if it has a budget (Cotter et al. 1984, 183).

<sup>28</sup> Non- Election period organizational maintenance is measured by the same variables as the election period maintenance.

<sup>29</sup> Continuity of structure in non-election periods is indicated by whether a party organization has its own telephone number and if the party has a year round headquarters.

<sup>30</sup> Professional staffing is measured by whether the party has any paid staff and if the chair receives a salary (Cotter et al. 1984, 185).

organizational strength, Pennsylvania's Democratic Party came in second in the nation with a score of 1.033 while New Jersey was ranked the strongest and New York third (Cotter et al. 1984, 50). Pennsylvania's Republican Party was ranked third in the nation with a score of .943 with New Jersey being ranked the strongest and New York second (Cotter et al. 1984, 50). In sum, the top three states of county party organizational strength were all located in the Northeast and shared borders. I underscore this only to illuminate the shared history of the states in the origin of the country – all three states have a rich, old political history.

*Political and Social Change Comes to Pennsylvania*

Mayhew (1986) notes that in the early 1960s many county organizations in Pennsylvania were slating candidates and handing out patronage, but were slowly losing control to activists inside both parties (60). As with the rest of the nation, Pennsylvania soon began to see the effects of a rise in candidate-centered politics with a decline in party identification overall in the public (Wattenberg 1991) as well as a party realignment caused by the Civil Rights Movement. While the party organizations started to see an influx of activists bringing their priorities to the table and demanding candidates that more closely reflected those policies; these changes do not necessarily indicate a complete breakdown of the party organization. Given that the party organization was already established, co-opting the policy demands of candidates does not change the *structure* as much as change *who* is in those seats of power (Trounstine 2008).

I argue that while the strong party systems of PA have changed in that we do not see patronage as explicit and expected as we once did<sup>31</sup> – the strong party perception and

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<sup>31</sup> For example, the local elections of 2013 brought with it a new Democratic Mayor of

phenomenon is one that pervades the political culture across Pennsylvania. Thus, when considering recruitment efforts of political parties, the perception of a strong party system is one that may have electoral consequences as deterrence for potential female candidates. After all, when reviewing the five elements of the TPO as defined by Mayhew, the first four are still applicable in most county parties across Pennsylvania. It is the last element of motivation is what seems to have changed. Material incentives previously drove party politics in Pennsylvania and while the spoils still go to the victor; due to reform era measures, the state's parties and its politics have moved closer to that of purposive incentives motivating activists. This is not to say that opportunities for employment are not available through party politics, it is simply that per Mayhew's observations we would expect less of it in 2015 than there was in 1986.

#### Survey Methodology

In this section I draw from my Pennsylvania County Party Leader Survey of 2012. I surveyed 281 county party chairs and vice-chairs: 67 Democratic Chairs, 70 Democratic Vice-Chairs, 67 Republican Chairs, and 77 Republican Vice-Chairs across the state of Pennsylvania. While one might expect to survey 268 chairs and vice chairs as Pennsylvania has 67 counties x 4 party leaders, when collecting data on the chairs and vice-chairs I found that some counties had multiple chairs or vice-chairs, or no vice-chairs at all. I distributed my county party survey first by mail in March 2012 with three electronic follow-ups when e-mail addresses were available through December 2012. Of the 281 surveyed, 100 responded,

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Pittsburgh, Bill Peduto. Bill Peduto considers himself a Progressive Democrat and has made it clear that every city job will be open to the entire nation to apply. He launched a new website: <http://talent-city.com> to state that patronage would not dictate who earns a city position (Bauder 2013).



yielding 35.6% response rate<sup>32</sup>. Regarding geographic distribution, I received responses for 58 of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania. The three-page survey was a series of closed-end and open-ended questions aimed at gathering data on county party activities and can be found in Appendix A.

As noted in earlier sections of the dissertation, I lean on Cotter et al. (1984), Mayhew (1986), Sanbonmatsu (2006), and Crowder-Meyer (2010) in my choice of how to operationalize political party strength by two primary sets of variables: institutional and electoral. The electoral measures include: candidate services, candidate recruitment, and candidate gatekeeping. The institutional measures include if the party organization has a constitution/bylaws, a headquarters year round or only during election season, and/or website.

#### Operationalizing Party Strength

For the purposes of this dissertation, a strong political party organization is defined by the presence of three primary characteristics: the organization has a strong influence on the nomination of candidates, provides substantive services to their desired candidate(s), and offers an institutional presence in the community with physical space (headquarters), virtual space (website), and community leadership. This definition of a strong party is one that has been used by many different scholars over decades including Cotter et al. 1984, Mayhew 1986, Sanbonmatsu 2006, and Crowder-Meyer 2010.

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<sup>32</sup> This is an acceptable response rate for this type of mail survey of party leaders. Sanbonmatsu's (2006, 69) work in *Where Women Run* also had a 35% response rate.

### Institutional Measures

The institutional measures largely stem from the work of Cotter et al. (1984). They include if the party organization has a constitution/bylaws, headquarters, and/or website<sup>33</sup>. Having organizational by-laws gives the local parties power to internally police themselves and govern. Including headquarters' as a measurement is a sign of durability and vitality, meaning that having headquarters year-round versus during an election season sends a signal to the community that the party is a fixture in the community that serves a purpose year round.

Like Cotter et al. (1984), I ask for the tenure of the chair/vice-chair filling out the survey to determine how continuous leadership may impact strength. On the one hand, an organization with little turnover in leadership may indicate strength, or it could indicate a weak party in which leadership positions are hard to fill. Thus, continuous leadership could be a consequence of lack of competition. On the other hand, if the party is strong it is possible to have viable leadership contests, meaning that turnover could be a sign of vitality. I err on the side of caution and expect that the less turnover in leadership is a sign of institutional strength of the organization, as when there is continuity in leadership there can be continuity in programmatic efforts such as candidate recruitment and gatekeeping activities (Cotter et al. 1984, 44). In sum, the survey data allows me to describe the current condition of recruitment and gatekeeping measures broadly across the Commonwealth.

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<sup>33</sup> Cotter et. al (1984) measured if the party organizations sent out a newsletter and I am using website in its place to modernize the measure. The point of the measure is to identify the scale of communication efforts that are continuous, not a specific form of the communication necessarily.

## Electoral Measures

### *Candidate Gatekeeping*

Perhaps the epitome of a strong party is to determine what candidates are listed on the ballot. Certainly, some ways to ensure that *your* candidate lands on the ballot is to recruit her and offer her candidate services listed above. Another way in which the party can control who is on the nominating ballot is through a concept called gatekeeping. Gatekeeping here refers to the party's efforts to influence the nomination process (Sanbonmatsu 2006, 2). Gatekeeping by the party could include rebuffing potential candidates and discouraging candidacies. To measure the gatekeeping activities of the local parties I ask about the instances where the party encouraged a candidate *not* to run and if the party formally endorsed a candidate in a primary election.

### *Candidate Recruitment*

To begin to understand the landscape of county party candidate recruitment, I asked the respondents if they believed their recruitment efforts have increased, decreased, or stayed about the same over the last ten years. Then I moved to more specific questions on candidate recruitment in order to gain a greater understanding of what practices the party currently practices. I measured recruitment with the following variables: encouraged a candidate to run; has a formal process or committee in place to identify potential candidates; has a person in charge of candidate recruitment; identify what groups your party works with to identify candidates<sup>34</sup>; candidate characteristics party leaders desire of potential candidates. On the

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<sup>34</sup>The following groups were listed to choose from: local party leaders, state party leaders, legislative leaders, chamber of commerce, labor unions, gun control, Pro-Choice, Pro-Life, Religious/Church groups, gun owners, farmers, local/community, medical community, teachers, Tea Party, AARP, trial lawyers, women's groups, environmental groups, veterans, firefighter/police groups, or other.

latter, I asked the party leaders if they valued any of the following characteristics: has previously held elected office; has held appointed office; has been active in the party; is a community activist/volunteer; is a lawyer; is a teacher; is a businessperson; is independently wealthy; and is an effective fundraiser. Additionally, in order to consider the county party leader's gender attitudes and elective office I asked questions concerning the electoral advantage/disadvantages they perceived to exist: "Do women have a (dis)advantage electorally?; Do men have an (dis)advantage electorally?" As a follow-up, I asked the respondents what elective offices they perceived to be an electoral (dis)advantage for men and women on the survey.

#### *Candidate Services*

From previous works in political science we know that a strong active party offers candidates valuable services (Cotter et al. 1984; Mayhew 1986). Presumably, if these services were not available, there would be little need for the party organization from the candidate's perspective and would require that the candidate herself build her own organization. As noted earlier in the debate over the definition of a political party organization, there are some scholars who believe that candidates themselves drive the party – instead of the party organization driving the candidate. I operationalized party strength through the presence of candidate services, which are measured using the following twelve variables: contribute money directly to the candidate; help candidates meet nomination requirements; made direct campaign contributions; assist candidates with fundraising; created GOTV drives; share voter lists with candidates; create a website for the candidate; create and mail campaign materials; create television ads for candidate; organize campaign events; conduct polls for candidates; and train candidates or campaign staff. These are

measures used by scholars to indicate a strong, active party at the state and local levels (Cotter et al. 1984; Sanbonmatsu 2006; Crowder-Meyer 2010).

### Survey Results

The County Party Leader Survey offers an opportunity to measure Pennsylvania's county party strength and understand what the landscape looks like for candidates. More specifically, the survey will help reveal the recruitment process by county party chairs and vice-chairs undertake and the intersection of gender and recruitment. In sum, the survey will help describe what is currently taking place on the ground in terms of political party candidate recruitment. The survey results are helpful in describing the current landscape of county parties in Pennsylvania, but it is certainly not exhaustive. It is not exhaustive in reach despite the 35.6% response rate or in scope as it is unable to more fully capture the dynamic relationship between party and candidate. The survey is a raw, crude measure to generalize the party setting in Pennsylvania and will be expounded upon with in-depth interviews in the next chapter.

As noted earlier, the response rate to the survey was 35.6% and respondents came from 58<sup>35</sup> of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania, which is 87% of the counties reporting. The demographic results of respondents are illustrated in Tables 2.1 and 2.2. The survey respondents' demographic information is as follows: 59% of the respondents were male, 41% of the respondents were female, 97% of the respondents were white, and the respondents were on average 60 years of age. The leadership breakdown of the respondents reporting is the following: 57% of the respondents were chairs of their county party and 43% were vice-chairs with an average length of tenure in leadership of

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<sup>35</sup> The nine counties without a response from either party are the following: Centre, Clinton, Forest, Fulton, Jefferson, McKean, Montour, Potter, and Wayne.

4.7 years. The shortest tenure was only a few months and the longest was 40 years. The partisan breakdown of the survey respondents are 45% Republican and 55% Democrats.

In both parties males dominated the chair position in comparison to being a vice-chair.

Table 2.1 County Leader Breakdown of Survey Respondents

Party Leader Information		Male	Female	Total	
Democrats	Chair	Count	23	7	30
		% within sample	23	7	
	Vice Chair	Count	8	17	25
		% within sample	8	17	
Republicans	Chair	Count	22	5	27
		% within sample	22	5	
	Vice Chair	Count	6	12	18
		% within sample	6	12	
Total		Count	59	41	100

Table 2.2 Party Identification of Survey Respondents

Party Identification		Male	Female	Total	
Democrats	Count	31	24	55	
	% within Party	56.4	43.6		
Republicans	Count	28	17	45	
	% within Party	62.2	37.8		
Total		Count	59	41	100

The dataset created for this section of the chapter uses the county party itself as the unit of analysis. In order to use the county party as a measure, I used the Chair's response per county party when there were multiple responses. This created up to two measures per county – Republican and Democrat, as opposed to individual level responses from all of the party chairs and vice-chairs. Vice-Chair responses were used in the absence of a chair's response. By choosing to include up to two units per county, one of each political party, the N increased from 58 to 85. However, there will be a few

questions that are requesting the perceptions of party leaders on a few measures and for that individual level responses are utilized and cited in text as such.

Using the county party as the unit of analysis, I first want to understand how active the county party is in national, state, and local elections. Based upon their responses the county parties of Pennsylvania are very active in all three levels of electoral environments. Expectedly, 80% of the county parties indicated that their party apparatus was most active in county elections. The respondents indicated that their second strongest electoral activity came in national (73%) followed by state elections (68%), and lastly local elections (55%). See Table 2.3 below. Understanding where the county parties place their electoral energies is important in identifying their priorities. The county party leaders have confirmed that they are deeply committed to county elections; therefore, the study of county recruitment and officeholding with this survey is relevant. In sum, based upon these self-reporting measures, the county political parties in Pennsylvania believe that they are very active on all four electoral levels of campaigning.

Tables 2.3 County Party Organization Activity

How active is your county party organization in...	Very Active	Somewhat Active	Not Very Active	Not Active
Local Elections	60%	27%	7%	6%
County Elections	84	14	2	0
State Elections	73	21	6	0
National Elections	75	20	4	1

N=85

### Institutional Measures

An indicator of party organizational strength is the presence of a headquarters, campaign office, adopted constitution/by-laws, and a web presence. Fifty-four percent of the county parties reporting indicate that they have a year round office. Sixty-seven

percent report that they have a campaign headquarters during election season, and a very strong 87% state that they have a constitution or by-laws governing the organization. Lastly, with regards to institutionalizing communication, 83% have an active website. Overall, the county parties of PA are institutionally sound given their presence in the community, in the virtual world, and in the form of adopted by-laws/constitution. When the data is disaggregated by political party, a slight pattern emerges. The Republican county parties of PA seems to prefer to invest its resources in the “bricks and mortar” operation of the party more so than the Democratic Party; thereby creating space for the party year-round and campaign season. The Democratic county parties tended to have a stronger online presence and internal organizing features than their Republican counterparts.

Table 2.4 County Party Organization Features

Does your county party organization have...	Total	Dems	Repubs
A year-round office	54%	42%	68%
Campaign headquarters during election season	67	60	75
A constitution, charter, or by-laws	87	93	83
A website	83	88	80
N=84			

The value in gathering data on the institutional presence of the county parties can be summarized an indicator of party strength, presence, and priority. Presumably, the greater party presence in the community via website and a bricks and mortar operation, the more resources the county party has at its disposal. Another assumption that could be made is that the greater the resources and involvement in the community, the greater the chance that the party plays an active and strong role in nominating and supporting its candidates. Similarly, identifying that most county parties have a constitution or by-laws



indicates that the organizations are managed in a way that leadership can change, but the organization remains. Again, this is a very important indicator of strength and longevity in the county.

### Electoral Measures

#### *Candidate Gatekeeping*

A primary indicator of strength is a party's ability to control the nomination process. Historically parties have utilized the primary election endorsement process as a way in which to control nominations. Parties choose a preferred candidate and then put resources behind their candidate to help ensure a primary election victory for that candidate. As part of the County Party Leader Survey I asked if the county party endorsed in the primary election and a raw total of 24 county parties indicated that they have a primary endorsement, 35% of the counties reporting for the survey in total. The party breakdown is 15 Democratic, 9 Republican county parties. This is a surprisingly high percentage given that Mayhew (1986) had indicated that the previous decades had deteriorated the county party's strength and influence. Yet, the primary endorsement is still found in a number of county party organizations across Pennsylvania.

Although there have been recorded cases of men and women candidates not receiving their party's endorsement and going directly to the voters in order to win an election, they are more rare than common. The endorsement comes with resources by the county party, such as slate cards mailed to the district with the county endorsement, volunteers for door knocking and phone banking, as well as being featured at party events. Candidates who do not win the endorsement have an extra hurdle to climb. Yet, party officials who choose to have an endorsement process support them vigorously.

The Allegheny County<sup>36</sup> Democratic Committee recently changed the endorsement process in order to strengthen it further. According to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, the committee will collect both endorsement and assessment fees upfront. In previous years, the assessment fee was only paid after a candidate received the endorsement. Now, there is one combined fee to be considered for the endorsement. If a candidate does not receive the endorsement they can receive a 30% refund, should that candidate drop out of the race. The Allegheny County Democratic Committee stated very clearly that the monetary incentive to drop out of the race is an effort by the Committee so the endorsement will “have some meaning” (Potter 2015). Election lawyer Chuck Pascal is quoted in the article as stating, “There are times it’s appropriate to run against endorsed candidates ... But overall, you want a strong party organization” (Potter 2015). In this instance, the Democratic Committee is acknowledging that it is strong, but wants to ensure its strength by incentivizing non-endorsed candidates to drop out of the race. Party organizations in Pennsylvania want to remain the powerbroker of candidacies.

On the second measure of gatekeeping – candidate deterrence – only nine county leaders indicated that someone from their party in recent years has told a candidate not to run either *very often or somewhat often*. Of the nine party leaders that indicated discouraging candidacy six were of the Republican Party with the remaining three were from the Democratic county parties<sup>37</sup>. The gatekeeping effect is lower than expected

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<sup>36</sup> Allegheny County is home to Pittsburgh, the second largest city in the state of Pennsylvania.

<sup>37</sup> I chose to use an individual level response for this question, as it is the leaders themselves who would dissuade – not the party institution itself. Also, it is more important to learn how frequently this is happening rather than the areas where it is occurring. Also, as a reminder to the reader, due to the confidentiality agreement in the consent form I am unable to identify specifically which counties endorse in their primary

given the rate of primary endorsements. On the other hand, the party leaders may allow the endorsement process to act as gatekeeper. Or, the party leaders may not recognize their behavior or advice as being an active deterrent. In order to delve deeper into understanding these dynamics, I chose to follow this survey with county party leaders interviews.

### *Candidate Recruitment*

Recruitment efforts are often the sign of a strong, active party system, which is why Crowder-Meyer (2010) surmised that an active, strong party may yield more women candidates – assuming that they are pooling candidates from broad social and political networks. Additionally, we know from Lawless and Fox’s (2010) work that recruitment by a party official can help close the gender gap in candidate emergence. In total, approximately 30% of the county parties responding to the survey indicated that there was an increase in candidate recruitment over the past decade, while 54% indicated that recruitment levels “stayed about the same”. See Table 2.5 below for more details.

Table 2.5 Perception of County Party Recruitment Over Time

Over the past 10 years, the involvement of your county party in candidate recruitment has...	Dems	Reps	Total
Increased	32.0%	29.0%	30.0%
Decreased	16	8	12
Stayed about the same	48	61	54
Don't Know	4	2	4

N=82

Based upon the history of strong parties that Mayhew (1986) and Cotter et al. (1984) provided, perhaps recruitment levels staying at about the same could be viewed as the party system maintaining its strength. Yet, the challenge with this question is that I do  


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 process.

not have a measure of candidate recruitment prior to the survey. Thus, the response of recruitment “staying about the same” is not as descriptive as the others. While this measure offers some descriptive power it is not as illustrative as I expected when I drafted the survey.

Overall, 35% of county parties indicated that their party has “a formal process or committee in place to identify potential candidates for public office.” As a follow-up, when asked if there was a specific person in charge of candidate recruitment, 29% of the counties indicated that there was such an individual. In next survey question I asked, “Who has the most influence in choosing and recruiting candidates to run?” Fifty-five percent of the county parties indicated that it was the county party chair that had the most influence in the recruitment process. Other most frequent responses by respondents included the executive committee as well as local officeholders.

The next order of business was to determine what positions the county parties were most active in seeking candidates to run. The positions respondents most often cited recruited for were local and county races. In total, 81 participants took the time to write in a response to my question: “Please list the state, county, and local offices for which your party organization commonly recruits candidates.” All 81 stated local and county races, which for many included judicial races; but surprisingly about half – 40 of them indicated that they also recruit for the state legislature, and in a few cases the U.S. Congress. None of them cited recruiting for U.S. Senate or Governor. This is in contrast to Mayhew’s (1986) accounts of when county chairmen were party bosses whose reach was felt well beyond county level office. According to Mayhew (1986), county chairs routinely recruited for state legislative races as well as federal and statewide races.

When considering the strength of the party organization, one of its manifestations is the interaction of candidates and parties. Using individual county party leader responses, approximately 44% of the respondents believed that “only a few” of the new non-incumbent county and local office candidates had no contact with the county party at all prior to filing. Another 44% indicated that almost all or many of the new non-incumbent candidates of the party “came forward on their own without party encouragement” as one can see in Tables 2.6 and 2.7. While these data points could seem like contradictory observations they very much work together. As one will begin to understand through next chapter’s interviews, many candidates do arise on their own, but then go to the party for advice and affirmation. So, while many candidacies are entrepreneurial they still go through the traditional party process Mayhew discussed.

Table 2.6 Candidate Contact with County Party

Approximately how many of your party's new (non-incumbent) county and local office candidates had NO contact with your county party at all prior to filing...	
Almost all or all	6.3%
Many of them	7.4
Some of them	18.9
Only a few	44.2
None of them	23.2
N=95	

Table 2.7 Candidate Self-Emergence

Approximately how many of your party's new (non-incumbent) county and local office candidates came forward on their own without encouragement from your party...	
All, Almost all or Many of them	43.7%
Some of them	40.6
Only a few	14.6
None of them	1.0
N=96	

We know from a few scholars' work (Sanbonmatsu et al. 2009; Lawless and Fox 2010) that males tend to be more entrepreneurial and political self-starters than females. Perhaps Pennsylvania's political system is falling victim to the consequence of gendered socialization given how few women there are in the state's governing structures. Why suggest this? Approximately 42% of the party leaders indicated that "many or almost all" of the new non-incumbent county and local office candidates were encouraged or recruited by the party *after* they expressed interest. From this question, one can discern that the party organization is active enough electorally to be involved *after* some political ambition has been expressed. The potential consequence of this is leaving a number of potential female candidates on the sidelines given gender gap of political ambition gathered by Lawless and Fox (2010) or electoral aversion (Kanthak and Woon 2014) hold for the women of Pennsylvania. It is possible that waiting to encourage candidates *after* they come forward has a gendered impact on ends up on the ballot.

A focus of this dissertation is discovering the process of candidate recruitment, specifically from where the county parties of Pennsylvania recruit. Therefore, it is important to identify what external and/or internal groups the party organization recruits. Like Crowder-Meyer's (2013) most recent work, I anticipate that strong parties will draw from less diverse groups, what I call soft recruitment. Those parties that are weaker tend to use more hard recruitment techniques, which include mass appeals via paid advertisement as well as requests to local organizations for potential candidates. I asked the survey respondents to choose from a list of external groups from whom they routinely recruit and the results as a county level measure are represented in Table 2.8. Overall, the most sourced groups used in Pennsylvania to help recruit for local and county elections are: local party leaders (77%),

local community groups (34%), and legislative leaders, (32%). Based upon where the party seeks help with candidate recruitment it is fair to observe that many do not use “outside” political groups. Two of the top three responses are trusted party insiders. Finally, a local community group is such broad category that it can include the political and apolitical. Thus, the county parties are using rather insular networks with which to identify future candidates.

Table 2.8 County Party Recruitment by Organizational Networks

Which groups were helpful to your party in recruiting candidates for local and county offices in the last election (2011)...	Dems	Repubs	Total
Local Party Leaders	80.0%	74.0%	77.0%
State Party Leaders	20.0	29.0	24.0
Legislative Leaders	23.0	42.0	32.0
Chamber of Commerce	5.0	13.0	9.0
Labor Unions	41.0	0.0	22.0
Gun Control	0.0	3.0	1.0
Pro-Choice	2.0	5.0	4.0
Religious/Church Groups	2.0	8.0	5.0
Gun Owners	0.0	13.0	6.0
Farmers	2.0	16.0	9.0
Local Community Groups	27.0	42.0	34.0
Medical Community	2.0	3.0	2.0
Teachers	18.0	5.0	12.0
Tea Party	5.0	37.0	20.0
Pro-Life Groups	0.0	16.0	7.0
AARP	0.0	3.0	1.0
Trial Lawyers	5.0	8.0	6.0
Women's Groups	21.0	21.0	21.0
Environmental Groups	2.0	0.0	1.0
Veterans	9.0	11.0	10.0
Firefighter/Police Groups	2.0	11.0	6.0
N=82			

Looking closer at the party breakdown, both are utilizing the three most common at similar rates; however, there are some differences. Democrats are more likely to reach out to: labor unions (41%), teachers (18%) compared to Republicans’ zero percent and five percent,

respectively. The county Republican Party prefers to recruit with the help of the following: the Tea Party (37%) and gun owners (13%) while Democrats did not utilize either group for recruitment. Additionally, both Republicans and Democrats are reaching out to women's groups at a rate of 21%. While both Democrats and Republicans report asking women's groups for assistance in recruiting candidates at approximately the same rate I surmise that these groups are not the same. Given that this was a closed-ended question there is no way to be sure exactly what groups these parties are pulling from, I do know that the Republican Party has its own mentoring programs for women: the Anne B. Anstine Excellence in Public Service Series as well as the Pennsylvania Federation of Republican Women and expect that these are two of the women's groups GOP respondents are referencing. The Democrats, on the other hand, do not have such a mentoring program. Therefore, I believe the women's groups they are referring to in this closed-end question are diverse to include organization Pennsylvania Federation of Democratic Women, Planned Parenthood, NOW (National Organization for Women), Women's Law Project, Women's Way, AAUW, League of Women Voters, and many more.

To gain a better understanding of what characteristics party leaders desire in potential candidates, I asked the respondents to choose amongst a list of qualities. Table 2.9 has the complete list of choices with a ranking of "not important at all" to "very important." Per the survey, the most important quality for the individual is to be assertive: 94.9% of party leaders cited this characteristic to be very important or somewhat important. Other qualities deemed to be very important or somewhat important are: to be a community activist/volunteer (89.8%), has fundraising skills (82.9%), and has a job with a flexible schedule (79.6%). Reviewing these top responses with a gendered lens, and one can see the stereotype that male



candidates are more assertive than female candidates (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993). Yet, I argue that women are well equipped with these qualities. After all, women have a long history of being community activists, having jobs with more flexibility, and are fine fundraisers (Burrell 1994). Overall, the value of this measure is in an effort to gauge what traits county party leaders find helpful in order to win elections and to determine if any gendered patterns exist. On the surface, no strong male or female bias emerged. All responses can be found in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9 Desirable Candidate Traits

In your opinion, how important is it that candidates from your party have the following qualifications in order to win election to county or local office...		Dems	Repubs	Total
Has been active in the party N=99	Not at all important	12.7%	9.1%	11.1%
	Not too important	18.2	13.6	16.2
	Somewhat important	45.5	56.8	50.5
	Very Important	23.6	20.5	22.2
Is a community activist/volunteer N=98	Not at all important	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Not too important	9.4	11.1	10.2
	Somewhat important	56.6	44.4	51.0
	Very Important	34.0	44.4	38.8
Is a business person N=96	Not at all important	5.8	4.5	5.2
	Not too important	48.1	13.6	32.3
	Somewhat important	44.2	70.5	56.2
	Very Important	1.9	11.4	6.2
Is a teacher N=95	Not at all important	33.3	50.0	41.1
	Not too important	49.0	29.5	40.0
	Somewhat important	17.6	18.2	17.9
	Very Important	0.0	2.3	1.1
Is independently wealthy	Not at all important	26.9	26.7	26.8
	Not too important	38.5	35.6	37.1
	Somewhat important	28.8	28.9	28.9
	Very Important	5.8	8.9	7.2

N=97				
Has a job with flexible schedule	Not at all important	5.6	2.3	4.1
	Not too important	18.5	13.6	16.3
	Somewhat important	50.0	61.4	55.1
	Very Important	25.9	22.7	24.5
N=98				
Is assertive	Not at all important	3.8	0.0	2.0
	Not too important	0.0	6.7	3.1
	Somewhat important	50.9	46.7	49.0
	Very Important	45.3	46.7	45.9
N=98				
Has previously held elected office	Not at all important	11.3	20.5	15.5
	Not too important	30.2	15.9	23.7
	Somewhat important	34.0	47.7	40.2
	Very Important	24.5	15.9	20.6
N=97				
Has held appointed office	Not at all important	17.0	22.7	19.6
	Not too important	30.2	34.1	32.0
	Somewhat important	37.7	38.6	38.1
	Very Important	15.1	4.5	10.3
N=97				
Has fundraising skills	Not at all important	3.7	13.3	8.1
	Not too important	7.4	11.1	9.1
	Somewhat important	42.6	26.7	35.4
	Very Important	46.3	48.9	47.5
N=99				

We know that women have a long history of volunteerism in America, as it was acceptable to be “political” as long as it stemmed from the domestic sphere (Matthews 1994; Ackelsberg 2003). Women have been helping underserved populations for centuries. Additionally, as the primary care takers of families, they potentially have very flexible schedules, which county party leaders desire in order to better reach voters and fundraise. Political science research on women and fundraising as candidates have found that they compare equally to their male colleagues. According to Burrell’s (1994) breakthrough work on House of Representatives’ candidates, women of both parties match campaign receipts of their male counterparts. Similarly, Werner (1997) analyzed women candidates’ ability to

raise and spend donations at the state legislative level and did not find women candidates to be at a disadvantage. Other top responses are: being active in the political party (72.2%), is a businessperson (62.4%), and has previously held elective office (60.8%).

Additionally, in order to consider the county party leader's gender attitudes on elective office I asked questions concerning the electoral advantage/disadvantages they perceived to exist. These questions are to gain an understanding if there might be a preference to encourage and recruit more women or men for a particular elective office. Knowing if the county party leaders have a strong preference for men or women could help determine why there is such a disparity in terms of who is serving at the county office in Pennsylvania, as well as for which office they are serving. Overall, there was a similar split in that 37.4% of respondents indicated that women usually make better candidates than men, while 37.2% believed that men usually make better candidates. On the surface, there is not a strong preference for either men or women candidates.

Table 2.10 Gender Preference for County/Local Offices

Are there some county or local offices for which...	Dems	Repubs	Total
Women usually make better candidates than men	31.50%	44.40%	37.40%
Men usually make better candidates than women	39.20%	34.90%	37.20%

N=99

Looking at the partisan breakdown of the party leaders' responses (above) in Table 2.10, it is the GOP leaders who indicate that women make better candidates than men 44.4% to 31.5%. As a follow-up I asked specifically what offices are an advantage/disadvantage for both genders with an open-ended question on the survey. The most often cited elective

offices where women are perceived to have electoral advantages are: row offices<sup>38</sup>, treasurer, judges, commissioner or controller, and school board.

Upon reviewing this list more critically, one can discern that women may have a perceived electoral advantage in offices that are more administrative in nature or have less executive authority as row offices were the most frequent response. Men, on the other hand, are favored heavily in more executive posts and those dealing with law and order. The respondents listed the following elective offices where male candidates tend to have an advantage: sheriff, county commissioner, township supervisor, and judge. A couple of respondents wrote in comments that men have an advantage in, “all [elective offices] in our rural area.” These expected gender differences are explored in greater detail in the follow-up interviews analyzed in chapter 3. But, in general, a pattern is beginning to emerge that party leaders perceive there to be a gender difference in what offices men and women are “better” situated to hold.

#### *Candidate Services*

Offering candidates services is a sign of organizational activity and party strength. It is important to measure the services offered by the county parties as an indicator of party vitality as well as determining if the party’s services are desirable to candidates. After all, if the party is not offering services, what is the value add to the candidate to seek endorsement and navigate the party power structure? Table 2.11 illustrates the respondents’ feedback on such activities.

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<sup>38</sup> County row offices are: jury commissioner, clerk of courts, prothonotary, recorder of deeds, etc.

Table 2.11 County Party Services to Candidates

Did the county party assist any county and local candidates with any of the following activities in the last three local election cycles (2011, 2009, 2007)	Dems	Reps	Total
Help meet nomination requirements	87.3%	79.1%	83.7%
Help Candidate with Fundraising	60.0	60.5	60.2
Contribute money directly to campaign	67.3	51.2	60.2
Organize Campaign events	72.7	69.8	71.4
GOTV Drives	67.3	46.5	58.2
Polls for Candidate	16.4	16.3	16.3
Share donor/voter lists	78.2	88.4	82.7
Create and mail campaign materials	60.0	58.1	59.2
Help with campaign website	34.5	18.6	27.6
Create TV ads	9.1	7.0	8.2
Train candidates or campaign staff	45.5	51.2	48.0
Offer campaign advice and expertise	72.7	72.1	72.4

N=82

The most often cited services offered by the county party organization in Pennsylvania are: help meet nomination requirements (83%), share donor/voter lists (83%), and offer campaign advice and expertise (74%). The least offered services are those that require the most financial resources: creating television ads (6%), conduct polls for candidates (15%), and help with a campaign website (28%). Taking a look at the partisan breakdown of services offered, it appears that the Democratic county parties are more likely to offer services at a greater rate. For example, GOTV drives are conducted for candidates by 68% of Democrats and only 50% of the Republican parties. Similarly, the Democratic Party is more likely to contribute money directly to a campaign 68% to 47% of the Republican Party respondents indicating such a service. Meanwhile, the Republican Party is more likely to share donor/voter lists 87% to that of 80% of Democrats. The Republican county parties of Pennsylvania are also more likely to train candidates and campaign staff than the Democratic Party, 50% to 46% respectively.

In sum, these candidate services indicate party vitality at the local level with some limitations. Given the information provided by party leaders the greatest asset they can provide to its candidates are based upon institutional knowledge, which includes offering advice and expertise and campaign outreach, which includes help with nomination requirements. They lack the financial strength to make or break candidacies they once had in the pre-Progressive Era. Therefore, while Pennsylvania's parties are still active recruiters, endorsers, and gatekeepers of candidates, but they are not as strong as they once were. Based upon the survey results, an updated narrative begins to emerge on current candidate recruitment and party strength.

#### County Party Strength

Taking cues from parties scholars Sorauf (1963), Cotter et al. (1984), Mayhew (1986), Sanbonmatsu (2006), and Masket (2011) the measure of a strong party can be summarized by the presence of the primary endorsement, institutional structures, and candidate services.

Throughout political party literature, the primary endorsement is the principal variable by which to identify a strong party. As one can note below in Table 2.12, 35% of Democratic county parties reporting and 22% of the Republican county parties reporting still utilize a primary endorsement process to narrow the candidate pool. A much higher percentage of both county parties have institutional structures in place: 63% of Democratic county parties reporting and an overwhelming 80% of Republican parties. There were four possible institutional structures asked about in the survey: website, constitution/by-laws, year-round headquarters, and campaign headquarters. For the county to be deemed strong it should have a minimum of three of the four institutional

structures in place. Lastly, the third measure of county party strength, candidate services was also measured in the PA County Party Leader Survey. To be deemed a strong county party it should offer at least six of the twelve services listed in the survey question. Seventy-two percent of the Democratic county parties and fifty-nine percent of the Republican county parties reporting offered a minimum of six services to their candidates.

Table 2.12 Measures of County Party Strength

County Political Party		Endorsement	Institutional Structures*	Candidate Services**
Democratic	Count	15	27	31
	% within party	35%	63%	72%
Republican	Count	9	33	24
	%within party	22%	80%	59%
Total	Count	24	60	55

\*3 or more structures present

\*\*6 or more services present

What are the strongest county parties in Pennsylvania? Relying on the data provided above, coupled with the knowledge of previous parties scholars: parties that exhibit an endorsement, have at least 3 institutional structures, and offer six candidate services are the strongest county party systems in Pennsylvania. While the endorsement is very important, it may lose its value if the party cannot offer candidate services. What value is that endorsement without resources? Of the nine Republican county parties that endorse in the primary, five (56%) have at least three institutional structures and offer at least six different candidate services. Of the fifteen Democratic county parties that endorse in the primary, ten (67%) have at least three institutional structures and offer at least six different candidate services. This is a very high threshold to meet, so it is important to note that all of the county parties that exemplify the characteristics of a

strong party, which are listed in Table 2.12 do qualify as a strong county party. However, some county parties are stronger than others and those that are the strongest exhibit characteristics from all three variables in Table 2.12.

Discussion:

Are the parties strong in Pennsylvania? Given the descriptors offered by the survey respondents, the party system leans strong in Pennsylvania. Those that have an endorsement process in the primary are the strongest parties in the state given traditional political science measures. For political observers, party strength goes beyond the control of city and/or county party nominations. For instance, in Allegheny County, while the Democratic Party is the stronger of the two parties in that they dominate voter registration and most city/county offices over the Republican Party, they have, as of late, lost some “strength” in that in a few instances their endorsed candidate in the Primary Election have lost<sup>39</sup>. Therefore, in an effort to strengthen their organization even further they have changed their endorsement process in an effort to price some prospective candidates out from even seeking endorsements while encouraging non-endorsed candidates to drop out of the race. However, not all strong parties will need to reinforce their endorsement practices in order to remain strong. From my perspective, the identification of a “strong” party does not hinge on its nominated candidates to be successful; rather, strong parties also create a culture of intimidation and exclusivity, which is extremely challenging to overcome as a newcomer.

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<sup>39</sup> Most recent examples are State Representative Erin Molchany’s 2012 race and incumbent Pittsburgh City Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak’s 2013 race. In 2014, the Democratic Party’s endorsed candidate State Rep. Harry Readshaw overcame State Rep. Erin Molchany. Both Democrats were pitted against one another due to redistricting.



Reflecting on the institutional characteristics, all of the parties responding to the survey have variables that indicate strength, but it is *what* the party organizations do with their institutional resources that should garner scholarly attention. The data collected on candidate services indicates that the county party organizations are active and can help propel the party's candidate while offering non-party candidates an extra hurdle to overcome. While party endorsements and services can indeed be overcome by non-endorsed candidates, the rate of success for such candidates was not collected and would need to be a follow-up project as another test of party organizational strength. After all, it could be found that a disproportionate number of candidates endorsed in the primary by county organizations lose. If that were the case, the measurement of party endorsement would be a failing metric of party strength. However, based upon the previous political science literature we would expect that party endorsements and services to impact campaigns and elections and assume the same here.

While most county parties are not as strong as when Mayhew (1986) was writing, there are remnants of the traditional party organization that continue to be active, exclusive local clubs. Unlike social clubs, these organizations have a direct impact on our democracy and who leads us. With all of that being said, there are only a handful of counties in Pennsylvania that Mayhew and Souraf would recognize today. Based on the survey data alone we have learned that only 24 counties in the study endorse in the primary and nine counties admitted to acting as a gatekeeper to certain candidates.

Gatekeeping and recruitment are important functions for active political parties. When considering becoming a political candidate in Pennsylvania, it is important to interface with the county party system, as that is where a lot of resources for candidate

are housed. Moreover, one can learn a great deal of expertise and advice from party regulars given how active the county parties are in all types of elections. Yet, not all types of elections and seats are believed to be well suited for male and female candidates. Both parties seem to have a narrative for women candidates that differs from male candidates in terms of their innate advantages when seeking various offices. Additionally, the most oft cited quality sought in a candidate is “assertiveness,” known to be a more “masculine” trait, therefore creating a gendered hurdle for many women to contend with unlike their male peers (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993). The survey questions on gender offer a springboard to the interview questions in the next chapter, where much of the context on the intersection of gender and politics and Pennsylvania can be explored.

*“If the inside game in Pennsylvania is dominated by men and they are the ones who control all the money and a lot of the relationships, that’s certainly going to have an impact on fundraising for female candidates and breaking through those unfortunate glass ceilings.”*

*- Michael Fedor, Democratic Chair of Cumberland County*

### Chapter Three: Women, Candidate Recruitment, and Pennsylvania’s Elective Offices

In the opening chapters of this dissertation I have provided evidence of the historical negative relationship between strong political parties and women’s representation as well as the importance of descriptive representation. I have begun to add to the research on the electoral dynamics of the political parties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by reviewing county party leaders’ own descriptions of campaign activities and recruitment processes in an original survey. While the party system is still perceived to be quite strong in comparison to other states in the nation, based upon the survey evidence for this dissertation, the PA party system is not as strong as it once was in its machine politics days. However, the parties still remain an active entity in Pennsylvania politics that likely needs to be engaged in order to be successful in the state’s political structure. In this chapter I will more closely explore county party leaders’ own perceptions and understanding of the process of candidate recruitment and emergence for their own county party using in-depth interviews as a follow-up to the survey. More specifically, I will analyze interview data by county party leaders on the impact of recruitment processes on female candidate emergence. To that end, it is important to understand the history and scholarship on women candidates in the Commonwealth, which largely informs this dissertation. From that literature review I establish a few questions and goals to be flushed out with the interview data.

## Chapter Goals

Relying upon county party leader interviews, this chapter will offer a narrative on the following: what the candidate recruitment process looks like for both strong and weak county parties, identifying patterns of recruitment activities for both strong and weak county parties, the impact of candidate recruitment practices on women's candidacies, the role gender stereotyping plays in candidate recruitment, and why there are so few women in Pennsylvania politics.

I anticipate that the Pennsylvania political party structure will be individualistic in nature with a propensity to attract and recruit male candidates for public office. All of the work that has focused on Pennsylvania has indicated that the state has a strong political party system that is exclusionary to newcomers, which includes women as political actors. To understand if there is a negative recruitment bias against female candidates I ask the county party leaders a series of questions about recruitment, opportunities for women within the party structure, as well as what offices men and women make better candidates.

I expect that the weaker county parties in Pennsylvania will have a more exhaustive, inclusive recruitment process. On the other hand, the stronger county parties will engage in an insular, "soft" recruitment process. I anticipate that most county party leaders will identify political offices that men and women would be considered "better" candidates for based upon traditional gender stereotypes. Women will be perceived to be "better" candidates for the administrative county row offices and male candidates will be "better" at offices that have to do with law, order, and executive powers.

## Methods

As part of that initial PA County Party Leader Survey I offered respondents an opportunity to participate in a follow-up interview on candidate recruitment practices. The follow-up interview gave respondents an opportunity to explain more thoroughly their candidate recruitment practices. Of the 100 survey respondents, thirty chairs and vice-chairs of Pennsylvania's county parties participated in the follow-up interview. The thirty interviews, which were tape recorded, were all conducted via telephone between September 2012-March 2013. Of the 30 interviews, 18 were Democrats, 12 Republicans, and the gender breakdown was 14 women and 16 men. The interviews lasted, on average, approximately thirty minutes. The interview data will be used in this chapter to give greater context to the survey data previously presented. By including interview data in this project, I will be able to better understand the candidate selection process by county party chairs, as well as the role that gender plays throughout the county party system.

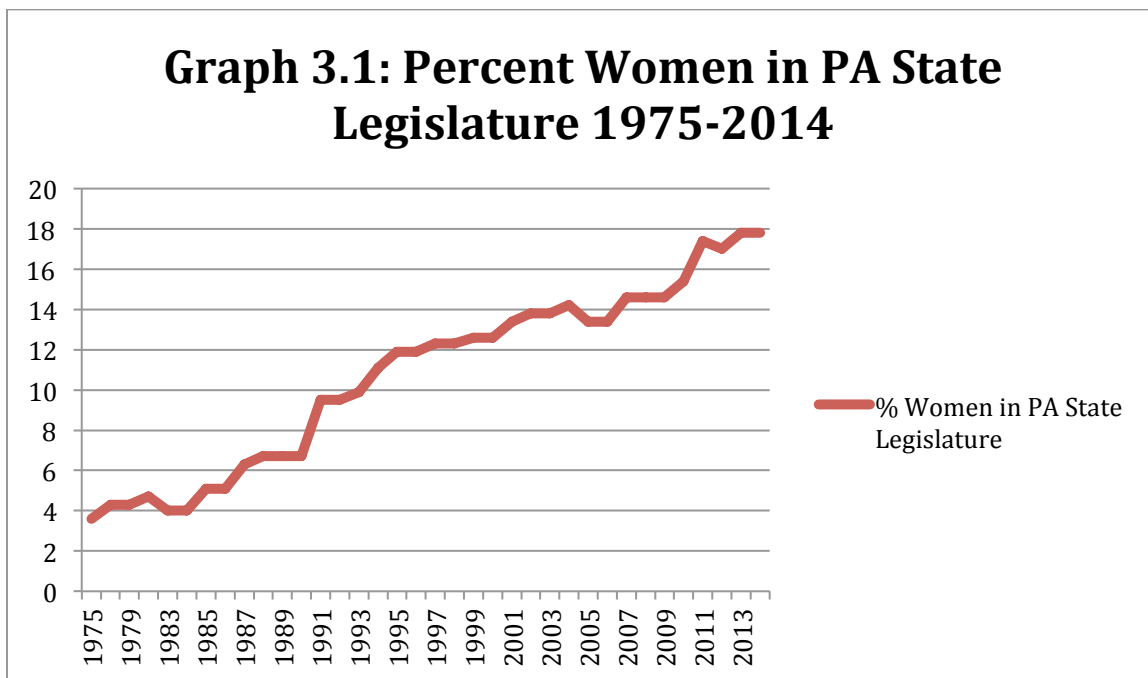
With all research projects and their methodological choices, there are drawbacks, and this dissertation is no different. To begin, the interviews are not random as they are participants in the survey pool who opted to further discuss their recruitment practices. When taking a closer look at who volunteered to be interviewed, I found that the subjects tended to skew Democratic and female. On the one hand, the interview pool closely mirrored the party breakdown of the survey respondents, as 55% of the survey responses came from Democrats and 60% of the interview respondents were also Democrats. Additionally, the interview subjects were slightly more likely to be women in comparison to the survey respondents. While women made up 41% of the survey pool, they were 47% of the interview subjects. The interview data skews slightly more Democratic and

female than the survey data, which may impact the narrative of candidate recruitment that emerges throughout this project. However, both parties do share Pennsylvania's social and political culture; therefore, I do not expect that having a few more women and Democrats in the interview pool to drastically skew observations on candidate recruitment. The interview schedule can be found as Appendix B.

To begin, I will review the history of women in Pennsylvania politics in order to offer context for this chapter. Then, I will describe the candidate recruitment process and the tools by which party leaders recruit their candidates utilizing interview evidence. Lastly, I analyze the county leaders' thoughts and observations on the intersection of party, gender, and recruitment.

#### The History of Women and the Marble Ceiling in Pennsylvania

Political science literature (Nechemias 1985; Rule 1990; Squire 1992; Hogan 2001; Sanbonmatsu 2006) anticipates that Pennsylvania will have few women elected officials as the state possesses many of the variables that correlate with having few women in elective office such as: historically "strong party systems," year-round legislature, and a high paying legislative salary. Unfortunately, this conventional wisdom is accurate. Predictably, Pennsylvania has never elected a woman U.S. Senator, woman Governor, and currently does not send any women to Washington, DC as part of its 20 member congressional delegation. Moreover, the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP 2013a) at Rutgers University indicates that only 17.8% of the state legislature is female, an all-time high for the state, yet ranked 39<sup>th</sup> in the nation. One can see women's slow climb in the Pennsylvania state legislature below in Graph 3.1.



Data collected from the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University.

As one can discern from the graph, there have been few notable increases of women being elected to the state legislature. The last dramatic increase of women getting elected to the state legislature occurred in 1991 when the percentage increased that year by 2.8 points. In raw numbers that increase meant that the legislature increased from 17 women representatives and senators to 24. Today, the Pennsylvania state legislature boasts 45 women elected officials. While women have yet to breach 20% in the state legislature, according to the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics (PCWP) at Chatham University in December of 2013, women hold 37.2% of the countywide elected offices. There seems to be much greater traction for women getting elected to countywide office than the state legislature in Pennsylvania. Certainly few would argue that 37.2% is a nominal figure in terms of descriptive representation, yet when one disaggregates that number you can begin to see a gendered pattern of officeholding unfold.

As of December 2013 the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University found that women hold 66.3% of the countywide administrative offices across the state. This is not the first time political scientists have found more women holding administrative elective offices<sup>40</sup> at the county level. Work by Fastnow and Levy found a similar dynamic within Pennsylvania in a 2001 conference paper (Sanbonmatsu 2006, 20). This dichotomy of women doing “better” in the proportion of county officeholding in comparison to state officeholding demonstrates that local officeholding does not necessarily act as a springboard to the state legislature, in the aggregate. If so, one would assume that the proportion of women in the Pennsylvania state legislature to more closely reflect the presence of women in county elective offices. Presently, there seems to be a loose relationship between local and state officeholding for women. Instead of expecting a direct relationship between the proportion of women holding county and state legislative offices, it may be worth to consider the type of county offices women are holding in order to determine potential springboards to state legislative office, as opposed to a simple dichotomous variable of holding county office or not.

To better understand the relationship between local officeholding and the state legislature, I collected personal and professional background data on the 2012 state legislators between January and March of 2013. The dataset was created by reading the official biographies of each sitting state legislator on the state’s General Assembly

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<sup>40</sup> Administrative offices are elective county offices that are administrative in nature, not holding executive or legislative authority. They are the county offices that process information as opposed to creating it. Examples of the countywide administrative offices are: such as register of wills, recorder of deeds, and prothonotary (to name a few).



website and coding each member's educational background<sup>41</sup>, previous elective offices cited<sup>42</sup>, previous appointed offices cited<sup>43</sup>. This data will be explored more closely in Chapter 4, but for this discussion, I will focus on the most frequently cited previous elective offices held by the 2012 state legislators.

While political science has offered some explanation for the lack of women in Pennsylvania politics, the literature has not been updated regarding the role of the Pennsylvania political party in candidate recruitment in decades. Moreover, only a few scholars have focused on the role of gender in the recruitment process in Pennsylvania. I will review two of such scholarly accounts of gender intersecting with Pennsylvania politics and use these works as a guide for my own qualitative inquiry into Pennsylvania's candidate recruitment process.

The first of these publications to be reviewed is a 1982 *Journal of Politics* article by Raisa Deber, "'The Fault, Dear Brutus': Women as Congressional Candidates in Pennsylvania." The focus of the article is on why so many of Pennsylvania's congressional representatives are white, middle-aged, and male. The researcher also asks, "Why are there so few women candidates?" Although Deber is focused on the United States Congress, many of her questions around women and Pennsylvania elective office are relevant to local offices as well. She tests four ideas that could be the source for the dearth of women in the Pennsylvania federal delegation: women are not running, women are not running in competitive races, women are not networking with those who have

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<sup>41</sup> Degree attained.

<sup>42</sup> For example: county council, school board, township supervisor, etc.

<sup>43</sup> For example: state board of education.

resources, and women are not winning elections due to voter discrimination (Deber 1982, 465).

Deber's work is helpful as it helps to narrow the variables at play in the paucity of women in Pennsylvania politics. Deber does find that women were only about 3.6% of Pennsylvania's congressional candidates up until 1974 (Deber 1982, 465). However, she argues that most of that was self-imposed and those women themselves were holding themselves back from filing. Certainly in that time period there were fewer "political women" due to societal norms, but she doesn't fully examine the role of political parties role in recruitment, nominations, or endorsements and the impact of those activities on potential women candidates. She mentions that county party chairman often helped recruit congressional candidates, but writes, "Although there is evidence that women were ignored and shunted aside by the Pennsylvania political organizations, those women who won office were those who did receive organizational backing from a major party organization or from another strong faction" (Deber 1982, 478). While Deber's (1982) work did not test political party involvement in the recruitment process, she drew the conclusion that while political parties may act as obstacles, they may also have the capacity to aid some women's candidacies. This is a similar conclusion to Crowder-Meyer's (2010) dissertation work that surmised that as much as the parties are the problem, they could be part of the solution.

Another Deber (1982) hypothesis that impacts this dissertation is the question of whether women candidates have similar political resources of their male counterparts. To answer this, Deber (1982) collected the professional and personal data about male and female congressional candidates. Unsurprisingly, she found that many women were not

in the “feeder hierarchies” to elective office in that they did not have professional degrees at the same rates as male candidates or come from the same dominant ethnic backgrounds found in Congress. Deber found that many women’s candidacies were due to the untimely deaths of their husbands, something that Gertzog (1995) also found as a pattern. The question of what professional backgrounds are a springboard to Pennsylvania’s legislature will be taken up as this was found to have an impact in Deber’s (1982) work.

The second scholarly work on women’s candidacies in Pennsylvania is Dr. Susan Hansen’s 1994 chapter, “Lynn Yeakel Versus Arlen Specter in Pennsylvania: Why She Lost,” in *The Year of the Woman*. In Hansen’s recount of the 1992 U.S. Senate election, she points to a few variables in Pennsylvania’s political system that led to Yeakel’s defeat by incumbent Arlen Specter. She begins by laying the groundwork for the reader by identifying four primary reasons why Pennsylvania is a particular challenge to all women candidates.

According to Hansen (1994), the four main reasons for the paucity of women in Pennsylvania politics are its political culture, *strong* party system, male dominated party structure, and professionalized legislature. Identifying these four explanations for the dearth of women in Pennsylvania politics is extremely helpful for this project as it highlights the intersection of gender and party politics.

Hansen (1994) reviews the political science literature on political culture and finds that Pennsylvania has been found to have more of an “individualistic” political culture as opposed to “moralistic,” which means that politics in the state is more focused on getting oneself through the system for an individual reward, as opposed to serving the

public as its own act of public good. Hansen (1994) argues that the moralistic states are more accepting of women candidates and women in politics more generally.

Secondly, Hansen finds that the state's party politics is a strong system that benefits mostly male party regulars and one of the rewards to party regulars is elective office (Hansen 1994, 88). This notion is one that is founded in work by David Mayhew (1986), Cotter et al. (1984), and Frank Sorauf (1963) who have deemed Pennsylvania to be a *strong* party state. Hansen (1994) also found evidence in the literature that female candidates were repeatedly passed over within the party system for men. Women were passed over because elective office in Pennsylvania was considered a valuable reward for the party faithful so much so that it should not to be devalued by giving those posts to women. Hansen (1994) writes, "As the value of public office increases, parties and interest groups seem less willing to accept women in positions of power and expertise" (90). The strong party system is one that rewards those within the party system currently, and that reward for centuries has been public office.

The party's endorsement has been an important variable in signifying political party strength. The endorsement has worked to alert the party faithful of a preferred candidate and help purport that candidate to victory. Women candidates have repeatedly found themselves on the outside of the endorsement process in Pennsylvania. Until recently, most women candidates not receiving the endorsement have lost. Hansen noted that, "Several women recently elected to executive or judicial office (Mayor Sophie Masloff of Pittsburgh, State Treasurer Catherine Baker Knoll, Commonwealth Court Judge Doris Smith) had to run against the party's endorsed candidate in the primary" (1994, 88). While the party endorsement has become less important as more candidates

are able to go over the heads of the party leaders and directly to the voters, it does not negate the party's ability to successfully support its endorsed candidates. In total, Hansen finds the processes and culture of both political parties to be barriers to women candidates.

Hansen (1994) also identified a male dominated party structure that favors male regulars, which created an incumbency advantage that continues to favor men. This system rebuffs newcomers and challengers and women are just one category of peoples that happens to be collateral damage in this culture created by the parties. Given all of this, it is not surprising that there have been few female candidates that have made it through the party system and upset an incumbent<sup>44</sup>. For example, she cites that many local municipalities have a strong volunteer fire department that acts as the locus of political activity for the community, which is a highly masculine environment (1994, 89). Therefore, the pipeline to local politics in many Pennsylvania communities would be heavily gendered and exclusionary to women's candidacies. In some cases the exclusion of women may be purposeful, but in most cases the paucity of women in elective office is merely an unintended consequence in keeping *all* newcomers out of the political circle.

Lastly, the fourth attribute of the political culture in Pennsylvania that Hansen cites as an explanation for the lack of women elected in the state is its *professional* legislature, which correlates negatively with the presence of female legislators (Squire 1992). Because Pennsylvania state legislators are paid a full-time salary for their work,

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<sup>44</sup> According to Hansen (1994), newcomers would have to challenge not just the incumbent, but also the party itself if they choose to run – a real obstacle. The author cites Pittsburgh Mayor Sophie Masloff, State Treasurer Catherine Baker Knoll, and Commonwealth Court Judge Doris Smith – all had to run against the party's endorsed candidate in the primary. So, while the party's endorsement matters less, the lack of party backing however, does not help recruit or finance strong female candidates (89).

the parties covet those seats as a way to reward their good stewards. In sum, the political culture, which is the totality of the political and social activities and opportunities within the state, all point to a less than supportive environment for female candidates. The state's party system, recruitment pipeline, incumbency advantage, and state legislative professionalism combine to produce a small pool of female candidates and/or culture friendly to female candidates.

While some of the variables that are a hindrance to women candidates is changing in Pennsylvania, like the impact of the party's endorsement, the one that is the main focus of this dissertation, the role of the political party in candidate recruitment, remains rather stable. Based upon the descriptive survey data presented in the previous chapter, the county party chairs remain responsible for candidate recruitment on the local, county, and state legislative races. The county leaders indicated that county offices were the most likely they were to recruit for, then local and state offices. From those responses, it is fair to state that the political parties in Pennsylvania are still largely responsible for identifying candidates to run as Hansen (1994), Cotter et al. (1984), Mayhew (1986), and Sorauf (1963) once observed, which makes the role of the party an important variable to understand when trying to explain the lack of women in elective office across Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania newspapers have also found similar patterns as to the cause of the paucity of women in Pennsylvania politics. Annually, one can expect to find three or four articles per election cycle that focus on the puzzle that is women in Pennsylvania politics. Reporters interview political scientists, party leaders, and politicians to find answers to the question, "What is the matter with Pennsylvania?" Recent titles include, "Advancing

Women's Role in Politics is still a Work in Progress" (Shuey 2014), "Governor Post Eludes Women in Pennsylvania" (Daniels 2014), and "Glass Ceilings in Statehouses in Northeast" (Martin 2014). In most articles political scientists and community leaders are sources and so much of what Hansen and others have already identified have been relayed for the public's consumption.

In a June 2010 article titled, "Pennsylvania Politics: It's a Guy Thing" (Bunch 2010), a panoply of explanations were cited for Pennsylvania's low number of women in elective office. They included "... social conservatism, strong political parties that discourage outsiders, as well as election laws that favor the old guard" (Bunch 2010). Happy Fernandez who was Philadelphia's first major female candidate for Mayor and city councilwoman tried to explain the role of party, which Bunch summarized as "...a kind of tribal nature to politics - both in the city and elsewhere in Pennsylvania - in which figures like now-disgraced ex-state Sen. Vince Fumo or former U.S. Rep. Bill Gray created tight networks that limited newcomers" (Bunch 2010)

Four years later, Jonathan Tamari (2014) was recounting similar sentiments in an article titled, "PA, NJ women face obstacles in political races" for Philly.com. The reporter wrote, "Local party bosses have immense sway in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania, particularly in congressional races, which typically hinge on support in just one or two counties." Citing similarities in party structure in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, which was found in Mayhew (1986) and Souraf's (1963) academic work, Tamari asked former Governor Christine Todd Whitman about her experience with the political parties in New Jersey: "The party apparatus, while they talk about supporting women, it's more talk than real action. I don't think it's all sexism, but when the people that you spend

your time with all look like you, you tend to support those people." Congresswoman Schwartz has identified the "tight party discipline" as one that undercuts women running in Pennsylvania (Bunch 2010).

The news accounts are plentiful and offer a fairly static view of gender and political parties in Pennsylvania. News articles may vary their sources, but the story is still the same: political parties in Pennsylvania are relatively strong and much of the candidate recruitment comes from insular networks that are deemed feeders for the political pipeline. If Hansen (1994) is correct, those insular networks in Pennsylvania are male dominated, and that is the pool from which candidates are drawn.

Echoing Hansen's (1994) understanding of the significance of *where* politics begins in rural and urban areas, in the 2010 Bunch article, Dr. Allyson Lowe, then chair of the Carlow University political science department is paraphrased as saying:

While females do tend to be active in these communities ... it's more likely in church or parent groups than politics. It is the cities that tend to produce more of the type of female professionals, like attorneys, who might seek elected office. Yet in Pennsylvania, the larger cities have strong, entrenched political machines that have not been very welcoming to women" (Bunch 2010).

Lowe is acknowledging that the pipeline to politics in rural communities can look a little different than in the big cities and while some expect more women to come out of the cities, they still have institutional obstacles to overcome.

Additional reasons found in popular news accounts for the paucity of women in Pennsylvania politics take into account the social expectations of women to be the primary caretaker for the family as well as the vast rural areas across the Commonwealth. In the article titled, "Women make up PA's political minority, say gender isn't issue" on the Pittsburgh's Tribune Review website, Republican State Senator Kim Ward is on



record as stating, “One reason we might not see more women running is that, no matter how liberated we say we are, in the end we're still the main caretakers of our children and we need to be with our children” (Fontaine 2014). State Senator Ward went on to explain how she spends her time, “...six days a week tending to legislative duties and her Sundays cleaning her family's home, doing laundry and cooking meals for her family for the coming week” (Fontaine 2014). Another female legislator in the same article sums up Ward’s remarks: “Finding that work-life balance is a huge challenge,” according to State Rep. Erin Molchany (Fontaine 2014). This narrative of the family, work-life balance issue for potential women candidates is also found throughout most interview data, supporting the idea further that Pennsylvania’s culture is steeped in traditionalism.

Lastly, the *professional* type of legislature that Pennsylvania has is often cited as an important variable in understanding the paucity of women in politics. In an April 2014 article in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, the full-time, highly paid legislature is highlighted as impacting “the structures around it and the overall political ecosystem,” according to Sam Bennett, former CEO of the Women’s Campaign Fund and former congressional candidate in Pennsylvania (Giammarise 2014). Ms. Bennett goes on to say, "Politics is a very well-paid career path here at the state legislature level. For that reason, it is very competitive for men and very well-entrenched" (Giammarise 2014.) Continuing with that sentiment, Christine Toretti, a Republican National Committeewoman, makes the connection between the long legislative calendar of several voting days a week, Pennsylvania's geography, and women’s expectation to be the primary caregiver in the family. She stated, “Even where I live, in Indiana, it’s a three-hour drive to Harrisburg. The way it’s structured, it isn’t welcoming for people who have children at home”

(Giammarise 2014). Because the legislature meets year round Toretta is speaking to its impact on a state whose culture is still rather conservative and gendered when it comes to child rearing expectations. In sum, as Bennett articulated, the very nature of the institution itself impacts nearly every aspect of who considers running to how the legislative process is handled – nearly all of which have gendered consequences.

In total, many of the same variables that political science has pointed to as potential sources for the lack of women in PA politics has been founded in practitioners' experiences found in reports by Pennsylvania newspaper reporters. In all news accounts, the strong party structure is one that rebuffs newcomers and protects incumbents. The pipeline for future candidates is also one that is gendered from the locus of where political activity begins in communities to seeking endorsement by the party. The social conservatism of most of Pennsylvania impacts the gendered expectations of whom should be running for office and who should be at home raising the family. Lastly, the full-time nature of the state's legislature is said to have a pervasive impact on the overall political landscape of the state.

#### Candidate Recruitment Process

Per the work of Hansen (1994), Deber (1982), party scholars (Sorauf 1963; Cotter et al. 1984; Mayhew 1986; Sanbonmatsu 2006) and numerous journalists, the party has been identified as an important variable in understanding the dearth of women in elective office. To begin to understand the current status of candidate recruitment by Pennsylvania's county parties, I asked county party leaders in an interview to explain any and all recruitment processes. As one would suspect, each county has its own culture and storied past when it comes to politics; yet some patterns did begin to emerge as county

leaders spoke of their recruitment process. Upon reviewing the interviews, four recruitment patterns surfaced: informal recruitment through personal/organizational networks; voluntary recruitment; formal recruitment through paid advertisements; and a “mix” that includes informal recruitment, formal advertisements, and/or voluntary recruitment. This section will highlight examples of the four patterns of recruitment discussed by Pennsylvania county party leaders.

*“Informal” Recruitment Model*

The most prevalent of the various types of recruitment was “informal,” which is typified by party leaders talking to people they know about possible openings in upcoming elections. Evidence of “informal recruitment” was plentiful and discussed by county party leaders in all pockets of the Commonwealth. Describing his candidate recruitment method, Roger Lund, the Democratic Chair of Adams County, provides a thorough explanation of his county’s informal recruitment method and why formal advertisements are less desirable:

It’s mostly through other party mechanisms because you can advertise something in the paper and you get some wing-nut that wants to be on your party’s ticket, and so we try to not do that. It’s more of a case of networking through people we know, we will put the word out through our county committee and say, ‘Do you have people within your church, do you have people within civic organizations that belong to the fireman’s fire halls or whatever that might have an interest in running for office?’ And a lot of times we’ll also look at people who are sitting on borough councils, mayors throughout the county to see if they have any interest in running for offices that are higher level. So, we cast kind of a wide net, we don’t do any advertising per se, it is word of mouth. (Lund 2012)

In this introductory explanation to the researcher on how recruitment is done at the county level, Mr. Lund identifies the possible gendered consequence of putting “the word out.” When instructing other committee members to recruit candidates, he begins by stating that they begin with an insular process by “networking through people we

know” (Lund 2012). He goes on to many mention organizations that are heavily male dominated: fire halls, borough councils, and mayor’s offices. The “people we know” he mentions will most likely be homogeneous and look much like the people doing the recruiting. Mr. Lund is describing a potentially gendered process with gendered consequences, even though he believes to casting “a wide net.” In sum, the process in Adams County, located in south central Pennsylvania, is quite typical of county parties as their process begins internally and then looks outwardly at those related to the party network.

Jeff Smith, Republican Chair of Butler County, provides an example of informal networks being deployed to recruit candidates by his Republican Party:

We would talk to the committee people and this is primarily at the municipal level, maybe talk to other municipal officials in that area to try to identify somebody. We’ve also - we’re trying to get the word out through the committee people through the periodic occasional speaking opportunities that if people are interested in running to be sure and contact me. (Smith 2012)

In Mr. Smith’s example, Republican committeemen and women are asked to dispatch around the county and speak to groups. In this instance they are relying upon the party’s network to meet with organizations and recruit from the groups they speak to. Similarly, Republican Chair of Blair County, Mr. Stickel articulates the informal process that often begins internally to identify and recruit candidates before moving on to the “outside” community:

I, as chairman or sometimes somebody who is on that committee will sort of identify somebody who has risen to the top. We get to know them through the campaign so, somebody who’s out there now working for presidential candidate, or one of our other candidates, who really steps up and takes a leadership role -- that’s really the first chance we get to know some people. Then sometimes we’ll discuss with them, ‘Have you ever considered running for office, here are some needs.’ The second thing that we do that we’re starting to do more and more is work with the chamber of commerce, to work within other organizations to see

people who are in leadership positions there who've done a good job and support our principles and our platform. (Stickel 2012)

Again, it is important to note that county party leaders may not be intentionally recruiting from one gender more than the other by their informal recruitment process. However, many county parties continue to rely upon the same internal structures of the party that helped create the gender gap of elected officials in Pennsylvania politics. Further, the organization that the chair identifies to help with recruitment, the chamber of commerce, is heavily masculine as it is an entity that promotes business interests to governing bodies. What is most interesting about Mr. Stickel's interview is that while he believes he has an open door policy on candidates, many of the tactics on how and when to recruit candidates can lead to favoring the male party regulars.

One area of agreement amongst party leaders was incumbency protection. While not all county party leaders mentioned incumbency, when leaders did speak of it, they spoke of deferring to incumbents on their decision to run again. The thought of most county party leaders was to allow incumbents first right of refusal to run, and then if the incumbents declined to run -- then and only then -- would the county parties begin to recruit for that seat.

#### *"Mixed" Recruitment Model*

Moving west to Allegheny County, where the second largest city in the Commonwealth is located, Pittsburgh, a similar story is shared. At the time the interview took place, a special election was underway and the Chair of the Democratic Party, Dr. Nancy Mills, used that election as an example in many of her comments on recruitment. When I asked if the recruitment process for the election was formal or informal she responded in the following way:

I have been open to anybody who would call to inquire. Now, this would just be the informal by word of mouth -- the insiders know that the seats coming up, I let the public know too because I've been interviewed by the Tribune Review and the Post-Gazette on this subject. So, now to get into a formal invitation to apply...we send out a letter to all of the chairs of the different municipalities within the 42<sup>nd</sup> district to advise them that we are going to be nominating a candidate for that seat. We also advertise it on our website and we also send out a press release to all the media to advise the general public what seat it is, when it will be available, and what the filing dates are to be a candidate for the seat. So, we have informal and formal. (Mills 2012)

What is typical in her response is her reliance on “informal word by mouth” and the expectation that “insiders know that the seat’s coming up.” Because it is a special election in the second most populous county in the state there is increased press coverage that many other elections would not garner. So, Dr. Mills, the party chair, uses the press to share the information with the public as well as the Democratic Party’s website. Due to the fact that this is a special election, no primary was to take place – in order to get on the ballot one needed to be nominated by the Democratic Party. Hence, the role of “insiders” and party officials played very prominently. In Allegheny County the Democratic Party relies upon a “mix” of both formal and informal process to ferret out candidates. More generally, Dr. Mills explains that recruitment is ongoing:

We do not have a specific committee just to recruit candidates because it’s too specific...that’s why we have chairs in all of our municipalities. So, if they’re going to look for a candidate for instance for the school board in Moon Township, then the local chair is looking all the time...every meeting they go to within the community...you sort of get into the feel of it, you’re always looking for someone to run someday and so people...say you were in Moon Township and they saw you and thought, ‘Boy Dana would be a great candidate,’ they might invite you to be a member of the local committee so that you can learn the political process from the real grassroots and understand what the procedure is to become a candidate. (Mills 2012)

Unfortunately, the informal recruitment process may also have a gendered outcome, as it relies on individuals' own subjective ideas about what a leader looks and sounds like. We know from gender stereotype research that voters react to individual leadership styles in a very gendered way (Huddy & Terkildsen 1993), so I would expect that evaluating leaders in the field to be gendered and subjective. However, Dr. Mills makes it very clear that that are actively recruiting and targeting women to run for public office. Dr. Mills is well aware of my work at the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University and has participated in the Center's Ready to Run™ Campaign Training for Women as a speaker on party politics. I acknowledge this because the interviewee kept actively stating the role of the party in recruiting women, yet zero women currently serve in the PA State House of Representatives from Allegheny County<sup>45</sup>, and five of the fifteen Allegheny County Councilmembers are female. I mention it because there could be a social desirability effect in her responses, given how often she brought recruiting women to run.

I was able to determine that the Allegheny County Democratic Committee (ACDC) uses a mix of informal personal networks and formal news and website outlets as the primary mechanisms for recruitment. The volunteer model at the ACDC was discouraged as Dr. Mills stated, "It doesn't work by just coming in from the outside and say I think I'll run. Pay your dues, maybe that's the easiest way to describe it. You hear it all the time. I hate that expression, but I think that it probably does apply" (Mills 2012).

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<sup>45</sup> At the time of the interview one woman from Allegheny County was serving in the Pennsylvania State House Representatives, Erin Molchany. However, she did not receive the party's endorsement in 2012 or 2014. She lost the party's 2012 endorsement to Martin Schmotzer who was accused of stealing \$50,000 from Allegheny County when he worked there in 1997. She lost the 2014 endorsement to colleague State Rep. Harry Readshaw.

Similar to Mr. Stickel, the Republican Chair of Blair County, Dr. Mills first looks internally to insiders and their networks to recruit, but differs in that she favors “paying one’s dues” to the party before getting the support to run. Paying one’s dues and being told to “wait your turn” is a very gendered response with gendered consequences as it is men who have tended to be with the party for longer periods of time (Sanbonmatsu 2006).

Other organizations use a mix of recruitment methods as well. As Marilyn Levin, Chair of the Democratic Party of Dauphin County stated:

Currently, we have a candidate recruitment committee ... they have been given a budget so that they can advertise in local newspapers or the major newspaper if they choose...In the past...me and the candidate’s chairman did most of the work finding people. Well, I don’t think that’s a successful way to building an organization, so I’ve set this new way up and we’ve expanded the candidate’s committee. I’ve given them free reign to go ahead and recruit candidates and interview candidates. (Levin 2012)

Ms. Levin articulated a process where a committee of individuals seeks potential candidates and reviews their resumes and two ways in which to reach those potential candidates through paid advertisements and networks of the recruitment committee.

*“Volunteer” Recruitment Model*

The volunteer model articulated by many county party leaders is one that waits for potential candidates to approach the committee. Bill Benner, Republican Chair of Perry County, offers a primary example of relying upon “volunteerism” to recruit candidates for public office:

While it’s not a formal process, it’s when there is a vacancy, often someone has prepositioned themselves to run for that vacancy, or perhaps two or three people have prepositioned themselves to run for that vacancy. So, the committee themselves really is not engaged actively in trying to go out and find folks, usually folks come out to us. (Benner 2012)



Mr. Benner makes clear that candidates are self-determined as the committee members respond only once candidates present themselves. Even more to the point is a male Democratic County Party Chair who did not want to be named. When asked about his county party's recruitment process he responded: "Well, I don't think there's anything terribly serious about it, there are people who raise their hands and volunteer, so to speak, and then come to the county committee in search of support." From this I gather that the committee is quite passive and does not choose candidates, but rather candidates choose themselves. Thus, the process can be inherently gendered, favoring male entrepreneurs, in that there is very little targeting of potential female candidates. Candidates are expected to come forward and to present oneself to the party organization for consideration.

Another strong example of the "volunteer" recruitment approach can be found in the Republican Party of Blair County. Mr. Donald Belsey, Party Vice-Chair states, "...as far as the process is concerned, no, it doesn't exist. The most important thing that we come across is the fact, people themselves, if they opt to become candidates then they approach us" (Belsey 2012). Again, I would argue that this type of recruitment has a very gendered consequence. The lack of targeting recruitment and failure of asking women to run translates into fewer women running.

Parties may go on to invoke any or all recruitment practices depending upon the electoral climate at the time. Earlier, the Chair of the Blair County Republican Party, Mr. Stickel exemplified the informal process of recruiting candidates, but he added to that explanation to include a multiplicity of recruitment practices. He specifically explained how candidates come to him and the role of incumbency protection when this occurs:

Sometimes people will come to us and say, ‘Hey, I’d like to run.’ Let me go on to say that nobody needs my permission to run and that might be unique. I know that there are some county committees, not necessarily democrats or republicans are unique to that, but there are county committees or county chairmen that feel like you need to get their blessing to run. That’s not why I’m here or why our committee’s here. If you’re committed to run then we’ll help you. We only recruit candidates where there is no candidate, or where there’s essentially a very weak candidate. As a committee we don’t go out and recruit candidates to run against incumbents, not that we absolutely support incumbents, but we’re not going to find somebody to run against them. (Stickel 2012)

Mr. Stickel identifies the way in which informal practices are complemented by the volunteer model while protecting incumbents. Mr. Stickel argues that if a newcomer from outside the party structure wants to run and there is no incumbent, the party will not prevent him or her from running, which is not the case in all county parties. Certainly, if you are an “outsider” coming to the party, they too will encourage you and one will not need to “wait” in order to run in his county.

I argue that all of the recruitment models identified have a potential gendered consequence that favors males. Given all of the work done on the gender political ambition gap (Lawless and Fox 2010) and to know that men are more likely to run for office simply to “fulfill a long-term goal” (Sanbonmatsu, Carroll, and Walsh 2009) – the volunteer model leads us down a path where mostly males will self-identify as candidates. It is quite possible that many party leaders, including Mr. Benner, view the “volunteer” model as being gender neutral, but the political science literature points to a very gendered consequence that can favor male candidates from this recruitment practice.

### Negative Gatekeeping

Overall, there were only a few cases of negative gatekeeping articulated by the party leaders. Previous work on Pennsylvania has indicated that it is a strong party state, meaning that one would expect to have strong gatekeeping measures, especially that of a

formidable endorsement process. Much of the previous literature reviewed in Chapter 2 described a state by which candidates must come through the party process in order to be successful, whether it was for a local or federal seat. Therefore, political newcomers like women would have a hard time breaking into this old system that essentially promotes from within. Moreover, the Pennsylvania party system has been previously described as the primary gatekeeper as to whether or not a candidate could even run, let alone seek the endorsement.

A male Republican County Chair explains the role of many county parties regarding gatekeeping, recruitment, and endorsement:

Once upon a time before I was chairman [there] had [been] a very heavy machine, [county] party machine, and you see it a lot in the counties and suburban southeastern Pennsylvania. Montgomery County, Delaware County, Chester, Bucks, these are known for having very strong machines such that, really the only way you get to run for office and have a viable chance of winning is if you have the blessing of that machine. (2012)

The role of gatekeeper is still viable in some county parties as the Republican leader mentioned, which works in alignment with the “individualistic” culture that Hansen (1994) identifies to in her work.

A handful of examples offered by county party leaders in the interviews revealed that they mainly deterred candidates from running if they felt that the potential candidate lacked name recognition or had some type of criminal background. So, for some potential candidates, party leaders would redirect them and encourage them to involve themselves in the community more before running for office. In the case when the potential candidate had a criminal background, they deterred the candidate to protect the party and the individual from humiliation. Other leaders acted as gatekeeper by re-directing

potential candidates to offices more appropriate to match the individual's credentials. A Republican Male County Party Chair stated that he deterred candidates:

Not for any fundamental reason, meaning, not because I want to clear the field for anyone; but I have suggested to people that while they're free to run, they may not have what's really required to run at the level they're choosing. And I would suggest that they try something more appropriate to them. (2012)

The party leader's words are very subjective here, which can be troubling.

We know from experimental work (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993) that gender stereotypes often inform how an individual evaluates candidates both on traits as well as issue competencies. Therefore, it is always a bit concerning when any party official has chosen to be the arbiter of experience in order to run. Yet, at the same time it could be sage advice depending upon the potential candidate and his/her bid. Delving deeper into the process of gatekeeping, State Senator Wayne Fontana who served briefly as Vice-Chair of the Allegheny County Democratic Committee:

So, in order to gain name recognition, in order to run a campaign to beat an incumbent possibly, it may take a lot of money, and it may not be able to be attained. So, you may have to wait. You may have to say, 'Well don't run this time, run next time,' or you need to begin to work the political system and get your name out there on your own, a year or two ahead by just going out and meeting people and those kinds of things before you actually run for office. And a lot of times it's a timing thing, it's about the timing of the actual race. We have, for example in Allegheny County, we'll have four judge openings next time at least, and we'll probably have 20 people running for those four spots, and a lot of those folks know they won't win. But, they're doing it now just to go through the process of getting their name out there by going to committee meetings and festivals and all those kinds of things so they get their name out. They know they won't win this time, and they may withdraw by the time that they have to file and run next time with more name recognition. So, sometimes you say don't run because it's just not the right time and you may waste a lot of money in doing that. So timing is a big deal. (Fontana 2012)

Other examples were explicitly based upon gender stereotypes. Ruth Ann Shaffer, Democratic Vice-Chair of York County, provided examples of when she and/or another

party leader had to deter a candidate from running. Ms. Shaffer quickly offered an example involving a woman who was turned away to re-think running for school board until her children were older. She stated:

It was a woman and she didn't have, again it was for school board, and we told her she'd be perfectly fine to run for the school board, but she needed to be honest and realistic about how much time she would be able to give to the school board because she had -- I think it was five children and they were all under the age of 16. Education wise she was great, but since most of us had served on a school board, we knew how much time was involved and we told her to think about it and come back the following week. And she came back and thanked us for listening to her and she decided not to until her children were older and we said that would be great. She really would have been well qualified, but we didn't know that she would have the time for that. We're pretty frank. (Shaffer 2012)

Based upon Ms. Shaffer's example, the county party leaders did not *immediately* turn the woman away from running and tell her not to, but they did plant the seed of doubt in her head and had her "think about it." Returning to the political ambition and confidence literature, it is not surprising that the woman erred on the side of caution about being able to manage the elective and domestic duties. Additionally, a female county leader who has some authority on the matter deterred the potential candidate, which is not surprising given that both women and men are susceptible to perpetuating gender stereotypes. Interestingly, not one county party leader gave an example of suggesting to a male candidate that he reconsider running because he had young children at home.

While there are cases of negative gatekeeping across Pennsylvania, there were some county party leaders who indicated that they were actively changing their by-laws ensure that they were no longer gatekeepers. Rather, they preferred to have the primary process take place and give voters the power to act in that capacity. One can chart this transition with fewer county parties engaging in an endorsement process than they once

had and certainly with fewer and fewer leaders actively deterring candidates. However, when party leaders do choose to deter folks, it seems to have a more negative impact women's candidacies than men's – whether it is through subjective comments about “waiting your turn,” making sure the office sought and the candidate's qualities are a match, or the sexist comments that women should wait until their child-rearing responsibilities dissipate.

### Why are There So Few Women in Pennsylvania Politics?

At the end of every interview I stated the percentage of women in the Pennsylvania General Assembly as well as the percentage of women holding countywide office across the Commonwealth and I asked each interviewee why they believed there were so few women elected in Pennsylvania. While the responses did vary there were a few primary responses: women do not run; and/or women are the primary caregivers in families; and/or women lack the ambition/confidence to run. There were also a number of explanations that came along with “women do not run,” including a favored response, particularly prominent of those in the Republican Party, was that women are just “too smart” to get into politics. The benevolent sexism of this response is very much rooted historically in the sphere that women are “allowed” and expected to circulate in – the domestic sphere. Moreover, the notion that women are “too smart” to get involved in running for public office idealizes women to be of a higher moral aptitude than men.

The benevolent sexism that was used to explain why women are not running for public office in Pennsylvania is eerily reminiscent of many anti-suffrage messages and places women on a moral pedestal instead of viewing women as human beings (Matthews 1994). Regarding the “family-life work balance” response, most people

recognized that women were still the primary caregivers in the families and that being away from the family for a few days in Harrisburg could pose a challenge. Other explanations given for women not running is the lack of women in “feeder” professions like the law and business in more rural counties as well as women not running even on the local level as the training ground. However, only a few county party leaders mentioned the lack of targeting or asking women to run. Party leaders do not see themselves as being a vehicle for increasing women’s candidacies or representation. Possible explanations as to why party leaders do not view themselves as a possible agent of change can be found in the “volunteer” recruitment or “formal” recruitment that relies upon individuals’ self-confidence.

Roger Lund, Democratic Chair of Adams County summarized his thoughts on why there are so few women in elective office in Pennsylvania by stating that it is because so few women run. He stated:

Any infrastructure that exists is stopping anybody from doing anything, quite frankly ... it’s the conversation over the dinner table, ‘Honey, which one of us is going to be the stay at home parent and are you ready for me to be out six nights a week at events and are you ready for me to travel and put 80,000 miles on the car?’ ... So, it’s really the women feeling empowered in the first place to make that choice and to have their home partners work with them - that more than anything I think is what’s halting women from moving forward in politics. (Lund 2012)

On the one hand, Mr. Lund finds that there are few women willing to run and focuses on home life as a possible cause for that lack of political ambition. On the other hand, the Vice-Chair of Mr. Lund’s Adams County Democratic Party, Marcia Williams, answered the question with a slightly different perspective. Ms. Williams believes that:

Both men and women voters do not look at women as being a strong candidate in many cases. We don’t even have a female judge in Adams County. I do not see our voters in Pennsylvania actually giving females a fair shot at election to the

leadership, to the strong commanding positions. Secondly, I feel that many women are hesitant to put themselves forward. Women frequently are criticized when they put themselves forward for that type of position, and I just don't see a lot of women willing to go that route. So, it's a double-edged sword here. (Williams 2012)

The Chair and Vice-Chair do seem to agree that women are not “coming forward” to be candidates, but I argue that this lack of self-identification by women as candidates does not occur in a vacuum. If party leaders are not recruiting women candidates and the culture of the area is one that is a deterrent to women candidates, it seems very reasonable as to why women are not coming forward. Certainly, the discussion at the “kitchen table” came up throughout many interviews. George Vitteck, Democratic Chair of Washington County puts it very succinctly about why there are so few women in Pennsylvania's elective offices:

Well, number one a female is a mother, and second women today have a second career, you know the ones that are educated. [It] used to be the only place a woman could go would be a nurse or something like that, and today, they're in all kinds of businesses, and it goes back to the same thing, why would you give up a career in order to enter politics? (Vitteck 2012)

Mr. Vitteck is quick to acknowledge that women are still the primary caretakers of their families and if they do have another career it may not make sense to leave that profession to pursue politics. Mr. Vitteck is an older gentleman who has seen a lot of societal changes, but acknowledges that while changes have taken place – a female is still a mother first in many people's worldview.

Republican Chair of Pike County, Christopher Decker, made a similar argument that women might find it challenging to run for political office if a mother, “...I don't want to sound sexist but that may be part of the reason [motherhood]. I know my wife, for example would love to run for school board, but just doesn't think that having two



young kids that she has the time for it right now. So, I imagine that probably plays a role” (Decker 2012). Mr. Decker and Mr. Vitteck’s remarks make it clear that regardless of which political party you are from, the notion of motherhood seems to be a hurdle for women engaging in Pennsylvania politics. Women and men in Pennsylvania automatically rule women out of the recruitment pool if she has a young family. This impacts recruitment as well as gatekeeping efforts by the party, both negatively impacting women’s emergence as candidates. Lastly, to speak to the culture of the state, John Kameen, Republican Chair of Susquehanna County, articulated that there are few women in elective office in his county and the lack of visual representation of women means that less women will be inspired to run – so it is cyclical. However, during his explanation he divulged a personal and professional feeling that is telling for regional gender dynamics. He said, “Not to be sexist, because I don’t think I am. I’ve been in court, and I’ve been in front of judges, and I’ve felt more confident for some reason, I can’t tell you why, in front of male judges than I have in front of female judges” (Kameen 2012). His statement is important because as county party chair, he does recruit for countywide judicial positions, which are elected in Pennsylvania. Certainly, he will be less inclined to recruit women judges because he feels less confident in front of them.

A few party leaders made efforts to connect many attributing variables to the lack of women in Pennsylvania politics, starting with the socialization process which impacts the “feeder” professions of business and the law to that of the insular recruitment networks. Sally Lyall, Democratic Chair of Lancaster County, responds to the question of “why are there so few women in Pennsylvania politics” by using her childhood experience as an exemplar, which only a woman chair could do. Ms. Lyall explained that

from early on in childhood the messages she received were that men are the leaders and women are the followers. If there was a position of power that was held by men and that women were there as a helpmate. She cites a few examples:

It comes to the perception from student council presidents in our high schools, and who was in charge of this or that. It was an early on message. So, I'm in my early 60's and for my generation it was a message that men are the pilots, women are the stewardesses, men are the school principals, women are the teachers, men are the doctors, women are the nurses, that was the message. (Lyll 2012)

Ms. Lyll is laying the groundwork for understanding why women do not view themselves as potential candidates, something scholars Lawless and Fox (2010) reach in their work in measuring the political ambition of women. Ms. Lyll's own understanding of her upbringing maps on to what Lawless and Fox (2010) anticipate, even coming from a woman who is the county party leader.

Michael Fedor, Democratic Chair of Cumberland County, approached the same question from a somewhat different angle focusing on the party organization's recruitment efforts as a source of few women candidates. Mr. Fedor states that recruitment is: "A lot of it is word of mouth" (Fedor 2012). He goes on to say that "recruitment has historically been based on relationships that exist already, who can we talk to, and who might be the right person and the right fit to run for certain offices" (Fedor 2012). Fedor's statement (along with many others) very much confirm the notion that recruitment, when it occurs, is very much an insular process that chooses from *within* the party apparatus; which happens to be historically male. He explicitly states this: "You definitely can look at the history of the party and say, 'Wow, it was very male dominated for a long time,' and a bunch of people talk in their circles, they're all male circles, that's I think how you create those gender gaps" (Fedor 2012). And while there are men and

women within the party organization, most of the women tend to be “behind the scenes,” which was confirmed by many party leaders. Mr. Fedor even speculates that perhaps the women do not want to run, those whom are already involved in the party, or that “maybe no one’s ever asked them,” which the work of Sanbonmatsu, Carroll, and Walsh (2009) seem to believe that this could be a solution for driving women to become public leaders. Mr. Fedor is one of the few county party leaders to mention the trajectory of candidacy. He speculates that there are fewer women holding office at the local level, which stunts the pipeline for women. He mentions that “local offices are definitely a training ground for state elected officials. So, if women are not finding those roles and getting those roles at the local level, it’s going to be difficult translating it to electoral success into state house and state senate” (Fedor 2012). From the data collected for this project, we know that women hold 37% of the countywide elective offices in the state, thus his assumption that women are not at the local level does not hold true. What Mr. Fedor might be seeing, however, is women getting “stuck” in the pipeline at the local level and not necessarily seeing a pathway to higher office, especially if the party structure is not encouraging that behavior. This lack of a “pathway” is another concept that maps on to the study conducted by Sanbonmatsu, Carroll, and Walsh (2009) on the pathways to the state legislature.

### *Pennsylvania’s Political & Social Culture*

“It’s traditional.” Throughout many interviews there was a statement, example, or insinuation that Pennsylvania’s political, social, and cultural orientation was “traditional” in some fashion. However, party leaders were also quick to explain that both the state’s culture and party organizations were very slowly transitioning to a less conservative

atmosphere. I did not specifically ask what the culture of the state was, but two questions in particular seemed to really draw it out: 1. “Have you noticed any patterns that women and men take to get elected to county or state office in terms of past experience? Recruitment? Officeholding?” 2. “Some people say that men make better candidates for some elective offices than women. Or, that women make better candidates for some offices than men. Based upon your experience as a county party leader, why do you think people believe this?” Through these questions, respondents established themselves in one of three camps: that they believed that many citizens of Pennsylvania still hold on to strong gender stereotypes, but not themselves; secondly, that they believed in traditional gender stereotypes, without explicitly stating it, or thirdly, that gender stereotypes may have mattered, but that Pennsylvania was slowly changing like the rest of the United States. In total, many leaders provided very stereotypic examples of offices that were better suited for men and women. By doing so, the county party leaders tangentially spoke about the culture of the political parties and their communities.

Political parties do not work in a vacuum as they are created and maintained by individuals within a larger community. While the recruitment and gatekeeping processes in Pennsylvania’s county parties could be gendered in such a way that negatively impacts female candidate emergence, we learn from the interviews that the political parties do not have the stronghold as gatekeepers and endorsers they once did. The impact of Pennsylvania’s strong party system is still being felt, but more like an aftershock rather than the actual earthquake.

William Miller, Democratic Chair of Clarion County, was reluctant and not proud to say it, but in his county, rarely do women run for elective office. According to the

Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University, only 21% of Clarion County's elected officials are women. Why? He states because it is, "...so traditional here" (Miller 2012). When asked to further explain that statement, Mr. Miller clarified:

Well, I mean you look back in history here, I doubt if there's ever been a woman even run for Sheriff, let alone serve, and the same with Coroner. I've been here 30 some years and can't ever remember a woman running for Coroner. Mostly the [women] candidates that have been successful here have been in the Prothonotary's office, in the Treasurer's office. We've only ever had, that I can remember, one auditor that a woman had accepted that position. So, yeah that's pretty much the way it has been. Like I said the Coroner and Sheriff are the two primary examples. (Miller 2012)

He went on to explain that many women in his county are active in local politics and are engaged, but they are not running for office; rather, they are support staff to those positions. His explanation as to why women are not engaged on that electoral level is telling of the culture both socially and politically:

And I think it might be the type of area we are. We have a very rural population here and it's, I don't want to say male dominated, but I guess there is a little bit of that and so I think that's possibly it. The society up here is rural and, I don't know whether it has to do with religion or just sociology, or whatever. (Miller 2012)

Mr. Miller and other county party leaders spoke of the cultural divide: rural versus urban areas. He also mentioned that the gender disparity in office might be a symptom of the lack of diversity in women's professions in his rural area. He pointed out that if there are not many women lawyers in his county that will impact who runs for District Attorney or judges, for example. Perhaps women in his rural area do not feel that they can or should pursue the law as a profession because it goes beyond their construct of what a "woman's role" is in their society. After all, there are plenty of women in the labor force in Clarion County. According to the U.S. Census (2014a), approximately 48% of the labor force is

comprised of women, so we know that there are women who are working and making connections in the county. Additionally, if women do not see many of their peers running for office or going to law school, then the likelihood of them going down that pathway is less likely. Other signifiers of the type of culture present in a county are the vote for the current president, Barack Obama and the percent of school age children. According to Palmer and Simon (2012) these demographic variables are indicators of women's presence in elected bodies. The stronger the support for a Democratic candidate for president would indicate a more liberal county and therefore potentially more women in elective office. The higher the percent of school age children present in a county, the greater the likelihood of the county being more conservative increases as the thought is that more conservative couples have more children (Palmer and Simon 2012). Clarion County had both low support of Obama in 2012 and strong percentage of school age population. Mr. Obama captured 31% of the vote in Clarion County and approximately 15% of the population is school age children<sup>46</sup>. Thus, the culture, the demographics, and party system collide in every county to affect women's pathway and likelihood of holding elective office.

In response to the question if there were any patterns in men and women getting elected to office, Megan Carpenter Republican Chair of Beaver County had the following to say:

I would have to say sadly that it is very rare for a woman to get elected here. We have two representatives on our side and a senator on our side who are all male.

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<sup>46</sup> See Appendix C for a full list of all the counties with the following demographic information: women's labor force participation, median household income, percent school age population, percent of white non-Hispanic, percent with bachelor's degree, percent vote for Obama in the 2012 election, and percent women elected to countywide office.

The other ones are all male that are on the Democrat side ... It seems like it's a lot harder for women to get elected quite honestly, and I think that's regardless of your party. We do have a few row offices in the courthouse that are female that are Democrats. (Carpenter 2012)

Ms. Carpenter's comment is one that was echoed by many county party leaders on both sides of the aisle. Her quote makes sense, as there are so few women who hold/have held elective office in Pennsylvania. However, according to some political leaders, like Ms. Carpenter, there seems to be some traction for women candidates running for county row offices. Row offices are the countywide elective offices like controller, treasurer, prothonotary, coroner, register of wills, etc. Many of the offices are more administrative in nature. As we have seen, women hold approximately 37% of the countywide positions. Marcia Williams, Vice-Chair of the Adams County Democratic Committee buoys the point:

The one area where there are female candidates successful is in the county row offices. The clerk of courts, the prothonotary, the county treasurer; the men don't seem to run for those offices. I guess because they're considered 'office work... The men are not running for those offices except on rare occasions...almost always female candidates of both political parties...so, we do have women in office in the county, but they are holding the administrative positions rather than the commissioner positions, or the state legislature positions. (Williams 2012)

Ms. Williams and Ms. Carpenter, while on opposite sides of the aisle and coming from different areas geographically, both notice the same pattern in their counties of women getting elected to the more administrative offices. This is a pattern that unfortunately, neatly maps on to gender stereotypes – returning to the notion that Pennsylvania's culture is traditional. It seems that women can and do run for office and assumingly are encouraged to do so for administrative row offices, but not necessarily the commissioner races or legislative offices. In sum, the social and political culture of Pennsylvania is still

overwhelmingly draped in gender stereotypes. When asked explicitly what office(s) is a “better fit” for men and women candidates, a strong gendered pattern emerged.

Referring to the survey data from which these interviews were conducted, the pattern of which offices were better for women and men were put forward. For men, survey respondents preferred sheriff, district attorney, commissioner, township supervisor, and coroner, to name a few. On the women’s side: judge, row offices, and school board. Returning to gender stereotypes, it is not difficult to understand how most of these perceptions come about. Positions with more executive or primary decision making powers were identified as male positions and the administrative offices were identified as “women’s work.” One local office that was deemed to be better for male candidates was that of township supervisor, but that one needed a bit more explanation, which A.C. Stickel, Republican Chair of Blair County provides:

Township supervisors, that used to be really known more as a county road supervisor, or township road supervisor, I know that sounds very sexist that a woman can’t drive a dump-truck, but used to be the way it was, not so much anymore as the townships have grown and become larger municipal governments. (Stickel 2012)

Mr. Stickel, and a few other leaders were quick to explain the evolution of the township supervisor position and why it has roots in a gendered division of labor. Per Mr. Stickel’s own explanation, men may make better candidates for this position because historically it is a position that required manual labor, which women were/are believed unable to do successfully. It is also possible that women are less likely to seek such positions because they know that the work is gendered and therefore they were not taken seriously as a contender for the office. I argue that it is beliefs about the nature of political offices, like township supervisor, row offices, and others that help inform the political culture of the



state at large. All of these ideas are built upon gender stereotypes, which are deep rooted in the political and cultural psyche of Pennsylvanians.

Speaking to the overall gender dynamics within the state Ms. Shaffer, Vice-Chair of York County Democratic Committee gave a few colorful examples worth reviewing.

To begin, she recounted an example while going door-to-door registering voters:

I'm knocking on doors and, "Are you registered?" and it's the lady of the house and, "No, I'm not," and "Oh, well you need to register." [Her response:] "Well, no I just vote the way my husband does, so there's no reason for me to register." [Ms. Shaffer asks] "Why would you vote the same way your husband does? ... Does he have a uterus?" and she looked at me and said, "Well, no of course not." And I said, "Well then why would you vote the way he does? You're different, you have a different feeling on things." ... even when they're registered to vote they vote the way their husband does. Now, that is across the counties, in the 'T'<sup>47</sup>, out in the hinterlands, much of that is what is happening, the women accede to their husband's wishes. (Shaffer 2012)

She went on to explain that in another circumstance a woman she met votes the way her husband tells her because he makes more money than she does. The women that she meets, who are independent, "... seem to be widows, single, or they own the company and then their husbands' married them, etc." While she explains the traditional, conservative culture of her county, she identified that it is changing and that there are a few women who are running for elective office. According to the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University, women hold 36% of the countywide positions in York County. Thirty-six percent is a respectable proportion of women in government, but the positions in York that women hold are the row offices that Mr. Miller of Clarion County mentioned earlier. A few statistics highlight the dynamics of the county: women make up about 48% of the labor force, Obama won approximately 39%

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<sup>47</sup> The "T" in Pennsylvania is considered to be the central rural part of the state (vertically) and horizontally stretching from the Northeast to the Northwest – essentially making a "T" shape on the map of the state.

of the vote, and about 16% of the population are school aged children. While York is conservative, it is less conservative than some other strongholds in the state like Bedford County, where Obama won only 14% of the vote. In sum, the culture of the county party is one that is rather conservative and relies upon gender stereotypes to largely inform who should be active in politics as well as *how* they should be involved. The expectation seems to be that women and men follow gender stereotypes and be involved in politics based on gender roles. Women may be able to be accepted as leaders as long as their domains are contained within “women’s work” like administrative row offices and men take on positions like commissioner and district attorney.

In total, the paucity of women in Pennsylvania politics is a culmination of a conservative culture that appears to lead party officials to overlook or depress women’s candidacies. By the way the leaders share their stories, women are less willing to volunteer to become candidates and they are less recruited because they are not in the insular circles that are staged as the upcoming farm team. Voters were discussed as part of this political culture, but very rarely were they “to blame” for the lack of women in Pennsylvania politics. When women did run, party officials were quick to point out what positions they were most likely to run for – administrative row offices at the county level. Some county leaders identified judge as a possible good fit for women candidates, but it was not overwhelming like the row offices. Overall, according to the party leaders, the lack of women in PA politics is rooted in traditional gender stereotypes – determining who gets to run and for what seat.

## Discussion

Based upon the survey responses by the county party leaders, questions arose as many county parties indicated that they provide candidates with services, but offer fewer endorsements than anticipated by the previous literature. Additionally, I found many similarities amongst survey respondents' replied to the questions around gender and politics. Thus, it was important to allow county party leaders the opportunity to delve into the specifics as to how they recruit and what role gender may play as part of that process. By using follow-up interview data I was able to test the following ideas: I anticipated that the weak county parties in Pennsylvania would have a more exhaustive inclusive recruitment process. On the other hand, the strong county parties were expected to offer a more exclusive, insular recruitment process. Lastly, I anticipated that all county party leaders would articulate political offices that men or women make better candidates based upon gender stereotypes. Upon analysis of the interview data, I was able to update the narrative of women, recruitment, and Pennsylvania politics.

Most of the weaker county party leaders interviewed cited almost no recruitment process, allowing "volunteers" to come forward or utilizing "hard" recruitment techniques like placing advertisements in local papers. The leaders of stronger county parties where they held endorsements were also those that seem to focus on "informal" word-of-mouth recruitment, which by its nature is insular and dependent upon the party leaders' own personal and professional networks to identify candidates. As one can note in the interview data, male and female county party leaders cite family-work life balance as well as women not being readily available as candidates as a reason for their own paucity in politics. Another observation was confirmed with the interview data and that

was the role gender stereotypes played in matching potential candidates to public office. Very clear patterns emerged in the interview data: male candidates would be better at the more “masculine” offices that focused on law, order, and executive powers; whereas female candidates could be better at offices that focused on justice, legislative, and administrative powers.

Another story that unveiled itself in the interviews was also one of a transformation. County parties on both sides of the aisle were found to struggle with questions of party strength and the role of party from yesteryear. For example, Hansen (1994) identified Pennsylvania as a state that is “individualistic” in its political culture and traditional in its social culture. While the traditional culture is still alive and well, the “individualistic” culture is less than it once was as there is less patronage available to politicians. Returning to the works of Sorauf (1963), Deber (1982), Cotter et al. (1984), and Mayhew (1986) one would expect to find a very strong party state that acts as a strong gatekeeper to potential candidates; but what you find in the interview data are opportunities for women, particularly with weaker parties. Most counties do not have a strong gatekeeping measure any longer, as most of the resources they can offer candidates are help with the administrative pieces of filing or once past the primary help with getting out the vote and outreach to voters. Thus, there are areas in Pennsylvania that could offer great opportunities for women candidates, but they will most likely live in the weaker party as weaker parties are nearly always looking for candidates. So, while the party leaders indicate that change has occurred and is occurring on many fronts in Pennsylvania, the strong party system still largely informs who runs and wins. In

summary, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has a political party structure that is steeped in tradition.

#### Chapter 4: Understanding the Role of Pennsylvania's Political Parties in Women's County Officeholding

Recruitment of candidates is an essential function of political parties from its smallest organizational unit locally to its largest entity – the national organization. This is important to note as the nomination of candidates has moved away from the central party organization to the primary voters, yet the recruitment of candidates has remained an important aspect of political parties. After all, recruitment of candidates is an absolute necessity in order to win elections and an important aspect of maintaining party strength. At the recruitment stage, party organizations have a hand in choosing potential policymakers before the voters are invited to be a part of the conversation. The early intervention by the party at the candidate recruitment stage is absolutely critical as to who ends up as a policy decision maker. We know from the PA County Party Leader Survey conducted for this dissertation that 42% of county party chairs/vice-chairs believe that the new non-incumbent county and local office candidates in 2011 were encouraged or recruited by their party after the individual had expressed interest in running. This response highlights the interaction between individuals and party interests quite well. Once some interest is expressed, it seems that most party leaders surveyed indicated moving that individual's candidacy forward.

There is little debate that party matters at this stage of candidate emergence in the women and politics literature. The focus of this chapter is the impact of political party strength on women holding county office positions. Secondly, this chapter will investigate the role county demographics has on the percentage of women holding county offices. More and more research has indicated correlations of certain demographics with women's officeholding, which will be tested in this chapter. In sum, this chapter will

explore what can be learned from women's county officeholding patterns across Pennsylvania. Do strong county parties elect more women? What measures of party strength impact women's representation? What county offices are women actually holding in Pennsylvania? Are there any gendered patterns? Does women's county office holding act as a springboard to the state legislature? What demographic factors influence women's county officeholding?

### Why Study County Officeholding?

There is little debate any longer in political science about whether political parties should be studied in relation to women's recruitment and officeholding; rather, the debate is whether strong or weak parties are advantageous (Sanbonmatsu 2006; Burrell 1993; Niven 1998). Three primary reasons undergird the driving force behind choosing to study women's county officeholding: 1) the assumption that local politics is a springboard to a political career for women, 2) the assumption that county governance matters and 3) the assumption that gender diversity in all governments matter. County governments are responsible for taxation, economic development, and quality of life issues. In sum, undertaking a study of women and county officeholding in Pennsylvania helps to explain if there is indeed a pipeline of experienced women candidates at the county level to springboard to the state legislature. Moreover, if one understands the public policy impact of women's descriptive representation on county governments -- then all three reasons are worth investigating the relationship of the political party to women's county officeholding. In the case of Pennsylvania, we know that women are not well represented at the state level (17.8% of the state legislature). Is that low rate symptomatic of a lack of a pipeline from women's local officeholding? What role does the county political party

play in recruiting and acting as gatekeeper to the county office? Does a strong party presence in the county correlate with low levels of women's officeholding? More specifically, what attributes of party strength correlate with low levels of women's officeholding?

### Chapter Goals

To begin, I will describe the current state of county officeholding in Pennsylvania as a backdrop to future analysis. Then I will test the relationship between county political parties and women's officeholding at the county level. In order to do so, I will conduct bivariate correlations as well as a multivariate analysis. I will explore the idea that countywide officeholding can be a springboard to the state legislature; then, I will dig a little deeper to determine if the pathways are gendered. For women and politics scholars who believe that local government can be the springboard to other elective offices this could be a very fruitful area of study.

### Countywide Elective Positions in Pennsylvania

This section will review where women are holding county office and at what rate. This data collection effort undergirds much of this chapter's work. As mentioned in the above section, it is important to understand what role women are playing in their county governments because county governments are not only an important policy making body, but also because they could be a source of potential candidates for the state legislature, which has traditionally not done well in terms of descriptive representation of women. I turn to the PCWP's<sup>48</sup> data collection of countywide offices, a level of government that

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<sup>48</sup> I articulate this as the PCWP's (Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University) data as it is on their website, but I am the executive director of the organization and oversaw its collection.



county party leaders regularly recruit for, based upon their survey responses. Using this data I will be able to test the relationship between women's county officeholding and the strength of the county political party.

The 67 county governments in Pennsylvania are structurally different. Some offer a three-county commissioner system as the sole legislative entity, while others opt for a county executive model with a county council as its legislative body. In both scenarios row offices<sup>49</sup> are present. The city of Philadelphia acts as both a county and a city meaning that the county government and its city government are the same entity. Some positions like coroner are elected in some counties while others have chosen to move towards appointing medical examiners instead. Given that each county government is unique, the total number of elective offices for each county does not necessarily mirror each other.

In total there are 806 countywide positions in the state of Pennsylvania. The frequency of each office can be found in Table 4.1. Pennsylvanians elect 189 county commissioners/executives, 73 councilmembers, 67 District Attorneys, 62 Treasurers, 38 Controllers, 67 Sheriffs, 54 Coroners, 16 Clerk of Courts, 49 Prothonotaries, 20 Register of Wills, 23 Recorder of Deeds, 30 Jury Commissioners, 49 combined Registers and Recorders, and 69 Auditors.

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<sup>49</sup> The definition of "row office," from the Bucks County Pennsylvania website: "As specified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania law, row officers include the following: Clerk of Courts, Controller, Coroner, District Attorney, Prothonotary, Recorder of Deeds, Register of Wills, Sheriff and Treasurer. The title of row officer came about in the early years of the constitution when the departments were first listed in a row on the election ballot" (Bucks County 2015).

Table 4.1 Pennsylvania's Countywide Elective Offices

Elective Office		Men	Women	Total
Chief Executive	Count	4	1	5
	%	80.0%	20.0%	
Commissioner	Count	159	25	184
	%	86.4%	13.6%	
County Council	Count	56	17	73
	%	76.7%	23.3%	
Clerk of Courts	Count	5	11	16
	%	31.3%	68.8%	
District Attorney	Count	56	11	67
	%	83.6%	16.4%	
Sheriff	Count	64	3	67
	%	95.5%	4.5%	
Coroner	Count	47	7	54
	%	87.0%	13.0%	
Prothonotary	Count	9	40	49
	%	18.4%	81.6%	
Register of Wills	Count	7	13	20
	%	35.0%	65.0%	
Recorder of Deeds	Count	10	13	23
	%	43.5%	56.5%	
Combined Admin Offices	Count	8	41	49
	%	16.3%	83.7%	
Treasurer	Count	22	40	62
	%	35.5%	64.5%	
Controller	Count	29	9	38
	%	76.3%	23.7%	
Auditor	Count	20	49	69
	%	29.0%	71.0%	
Jury Commissioner	Count	10	20	30
	%	33.3%	66.7%	
Total	Count	506	300	806
	%	62.8%	37.2%	

*Gender and Countywide Office*

Overall, women hold approximately 37% of Pennsylvania's countywide positions. This is a much stronger rate than their averages for federal and state office. However, the county positions women tend to hold are that of an administrative nature as opposed to legislative or legal positions. For example, 71% of auditors, 67% of jury commissioners, and 84% of the combined administrative positions<sup>50</sup> are women. On the other end of the spectrum, men overwhelmingly dominate executive and law and order positions. Approximately 96% of Sheriffs, 84% of District Attorneys, and 86% of Commissioners are men.

To better understand the differences between men's and women's officeholding experiences at the county level, they have been categorized by job duties: executive/legislative, law and order, and administrative. The executive/legislative category consists of the following county positions: County Executive, County Councilor, and County Commissioner. These positions are grouped together as they share the policy-making responsibility for the county. The law and order category includes the following county positions: District Attorney, Sheriff, and Coroner. The law and order category is grouped together as they work together on issues of law and order for the county. The Coroner often works with law enforcement and the District Attorney, which is why they are grouped in this category. The administrative category includes the following county offices: Clerk of Courts, Prothonotary, Register of Wills, Recorder of Deeds, Treasurer, Controller, Auditor, Jury Commissioner, and any of those offices that are combined with each other. The administrative categories include all of the offices that

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<sup>50</sup> Some counties have combined administrative positions. For example, instead of electing a Register of Wills and Recorder of Deeds as two separate positions, they have chosen to combine them. This "combined" category is broad category as the combinations vary from county to county.

are responsible for conducting the county’s business: collecting revenue, auditing departments, registering wills and deeds, etc. See Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Countywide Positions by Category

		Men	Women	Total
Executive	Count	219	43	262
	% within population	83.6%	16.4%	
Law & Order	Count	167	21	188
	% within population	88.8%	11.2%	
Administrative	Count	120	236	356
	% within population	33.7%	66.3%	

Of the 262 positions with executive and legislative authority (county executive, commissioner, and council positions), 219 (83.6%) of them are held by men and 43 (16.4%) are held by women. Reviewing the 188 positions with duties focusing on “law and order,” District Attorney, Sheriff, and Coroner, 167 (88.8%) are held by men and 21 (11.2%) by women. The gender disparities continue when calculating administrative positions across the Commonwealth. Of the 356 administrative positions, 236 (66.3%) of them are filled by women and 120 (33.7%) by men. By conducting a simple z-test for difference in proportions for all three groupings of positions -- all were found to be statistically significant at the .05 level. Thus, the difference between men and women within each elected office category is not random.

The gendered pattern of officeholding mirrors that of county leaders’ responses to an interview question that asks what elective offices “are an advantage” for men and women candidates. The most often cited elective offices where women are perceived to have an electoral advantage are: row offices, judges<sup>51</sup>, and school board. Taking a look at

<sup>51</sup> Judges were omitted from the countywide raw data collection because it is a separate

the list one can discern that women may have an electoral advantage in offices that are more administrative in nature or have less executive authority, row offices were the most frequent response. Men, on the other hand, were favored in more executive posts and those dealing with law and order, such as: sheriff, county commissioner, township supervisor<sup>52</sup>, and judge. Given that the county party leaders stated that they are most active in county elections, recruit for county positions, and perceive men to be “better” candidates for executive and law and the data reflects this pattern of officeholding, a chicken or egg problem arises. Do the county party leaders’ perceptions exist based upon their observed reality? Or, are they creating this reality by funneling men towards some positions and women to others?

There are a few ways in which to understand the situation that men are more likely to hold local executive and law and order county positions and women are more likely to hold administrative offices. Certainly, one way to understand this relationship is that men are recruited at a higher rate to run for executive and law and order positions and women are recruited at a higher rate for the administrative positions. This seems plausible given county party leaders’ belief that the men and women make better candidates for different positions. Another way in which to understand it is that men are volunteering to run for executive and law and order offices and women volunteer to run for the administrative positions. This scenario is also a possibility given that approximately 44% of the party leaders, per the PA County Party Leader Survey, indicate that “all, almost all, or many [candidates]” came forward on their own without

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branch of government.

<sup>52</sup> Township supervisors are elected and govern at the borough level, not county. However, it is an executive post at the local level and speaks to the gendered divide in who runs and holds executive versus administrative posts.

encouragement from their party in the most recent local elections. In both scenarios there is an undercurrent of gender stereotyping involved, whether it is party recruiters assuming that men are better at the executive and law and order roles or that women are good at administrative work. This stereotype is certainly not one that is present only in the political world.

For decades administrative work has been deemed “women’s work.” According to the U.S. Census’ 2012 Equal Employment Opportunity report, “...more women were employed as secretaries and administrative assistants than in any other occupation (3.8 million), followed by cashiers (2.8 million) and elementary and middle school teachers (2.7 million)” (U.S. Census 2012c). The report also indicated that, “...secretary has been the largest occupation category among women,” since 1970, when the Census started the tabulation (U.S. Census 2012c). Thus, it is not surprising that the one area of Pennsylvania’s electoral system where you find women serving are the administrative positions.

In the next section county demographic variables like women in the labor force, educational attainment, and party strength will be explored as part of the puzzle in understanding why some counties are more “friendly” to women in elective office than others.

#### “Woman-Friendly” Counties in Pennsylvania?

According to Hogan (2001), Palmer and Simon (2012), and Norrander and Wilcox (2014) there are certain characteristics of a district that seem to predict if it will be “friendly” to a woman seeking elective office. While Hogan (2001) and Norrander and Wilcox (2014) study the impact of demographics on women holding office at the state

legislative level and Palmer and Simon focus on U.S. Congress –the authors emerge with similar demographic patterns that are favorable to women seeking elective office.

In Hogan's (2001) study he tests the impact of demographic and cultural variables on the probability that a woman will be elected to the state legislature. Hogan uses the following variables to measure the state's political culture: women's percentage of the labor force, support for the Equal Rights Amendment, and state culture variable<sup>53</sup> established by Elazar (1984). He also tests legislative professionalism, the chamber (higher and lower), the number elected to each seat (multi- or single districts), population of the district, urban or rural character of the district, distance from the capital, and educational attainment. One particular area of interest is the expectation that women are elected from more urban areas than in rural districts because they are larger communities, which tend to have more resources that support women candidates (Darcy et al. 1994). Other findings confirmed previous studies such as that women are more likely to be elected where voters have greater levels of education (Flammang, 1985; Karnig and Walter, 1976) and have higher paying jobs (Jones and Nelson 1981).

On the other hand, Hogan (2001, 17-18) also found that "the probability of electing a woman in some areas is very low – particularly in districts with large populations in states with professional legislatures and Traditionalistic cultures where there are few people with college degrees". Hogan concluded that the factors mostly responsible for the election of women are culture and education.

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<sup>53</sup> The three types of state culture are: Moralistic, Individualistic, and Traditionalistic (Elazar 1984). The traditionalistic culture maps nicely onto the "traditional" political party typology used by Mayhew (1986).

Similar to Hogan (2001), Norrander and Wilcox (2014) focus on understanding the slow growth of women in state legislatures. They seek to understand why some state legislatures have increased women's representation at a faster pace than others. Their variables are similar to that of Hogan's: culture (Elazar 1984), incumbency, single or multi-member districts, strength of the Republican Party, and women's educational attainment. Unlike Hogan, they bring in the Republican Party as a variable believing that an increase in Republican representation may negatively impact women's descriptive representation as "more women have been elected from the Democratic Party" (Norrander and Wilcox 2014, 279). The authors learned that one of the most significant explanatory variables as to why there was a slow rate of growth of female representatives at the state level between 1993-2011 was the change in political party composition. They found that "in states where the Republican Party gained the most seats, the number of total legislative seats held by women decreased" (Norrander and Wilcox 2014, 280). They also found, like Hogan (2001) that education matters. Norrander and Wilcox's (2014) study confirmed that as educational attainment increases, so does the number of female legislators in the state<sup>54</sup>. This finding led Norrander and Wilcox (2014) to conclude that political party recruitment matters, especially for Republican women.

Continuing the study of the impact of demography on women's chances of getting elected are Barbara Palmer and Dennis Simon (2012). The researchers focus on the U.S. Congress, but their findings are transferrable across the federal lines. The impetus for

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<sup>54</sup> Like Sanbonmatsu (2002) and others, Norrander and Wilcox (2014) found education to be important, but when parsed out by political party, Republican women were not positively impacted by an increase in education. While increasing education was not found to be significant for Republican women, multimember districts were positively related.



their work seems to stem from one data point: 38% of the women elected to the U.S. House of Representatives were from three states: California, New York, and Florida (Palmer and Simon, 2012, 183). In order to determine if the demographics in the areas where women seemed to be getting elected had similarities, they tested the relationship of the following demographic types to women's officeholding: partisanship, geography, diversity, and socioeconomic factors.

Palmer and Simon (2012) found that women do better in districts that are more liberal, whether the women are Democrats or Republicans. Female House members are also more likely to come from urban districts because there is a greater volume of women with strong community backgrounds than those coming from rural areas (Darcy and Schramm 1977). Palmer and Simon (2012) also found some evidence that women in Congress tend to be elected from wealthier districts. They write, "Compared to districts that elect men, districts that elect women are wealthier, with 116 percent of national median income versus 103 percent for men; have a smaller blue-collar work force, 16 percent versus 25 percent; and have more constituents with college degrees, 24 percent versus 18 percent. In addition, districts that elect women appear to be less 'traditional' in the sense that they have fewer married women and smaller school-age population" (Palmer and Simon 2012, 201). Overall, "women-friendly" districts are wealthier, more white-collar, have higher-incomes, and have more single women than other districts.

Why do correlations exist between these demographics and women's officeholding? Palmer and Simon (2012) explain this relationship by stating that in areas where there are lower incomes overall, legislative service can be more attractive to men because it is an option available amongst low opportunities. So, if men's opportunities

are limited, then the government is a more attractive option. However, when income levels are higher, then other occupations are more attractive for men. This type of thinking buttresses the notion that women come from more metropolitan places, as incomes are higher in metropolitan areas, offering more opportunities to men. In sum, taking all of this literature together it is fair to assert that there are “women friendly” districts. These districts tend to be more urban, smaller in size, more highly educated, higher income, more liberal, and more diverse.

### Demographic Data

Taking cues from the literature on demographics’ relationship to women candidates, I utilize demographic variables in my analysis of women’s officeholding at the county level. Decades ago the expectation was that as more women entered the workforce, specifically the fields of business and law, more women would have the skills and network to seek elective office (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994).

The dataset created for this section of the chapter uses the county party itself as the unit of analysis. The PA County Party Leader Survey responses are the foundation of this new dataset. Each county with only one party leader response stands as the measurement for that county. However, in cases where multiple party leaders responded, they are either averaged when they are of the same political party or if the survey data is from the opposing political party, then the county is entered twice into the dataset using both parties’ responses separately. Therefore, some counties will have two measures while others will only have one. By choosing to include multiple responses per county when of different political parties the N increased from 60 to 85. The dataset also includes demographic measures of each county’s percentage of women in the labor force

ages 20-65 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014a), percentage of bachelor's degrees earned (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014b), percentage of population that is white alone (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014b), percentage that voted for Obama in 2012 (Politico 2014), percentage of school aged children in public school (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014c), the county's median household income (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014b), and percentage of women holding elective office in that county (PCWP 2015).

#### Bivariate Relationships to Women's County Officeholding

In order to discover if a relationship exists between the demographic variables previously identified in political science literature as having significance for Pennsylvania and women's county officeholding, bivariate correlations are utilized. In this section only, data was collected for all 67 counties in an effort to provide the reader with context of what relationships exist amongst variables statewide.

The first correlation employed was between the proportion of women in the labor force and proportion of women holding countywide office. The two variables were not found to be statistically significant:  $r(67) = .036$ . Although the relationship is not significant, it is in a positive direction, which is to be expected. However, no relationship was found between the two variables.

On the other hand, there is a negative bivariate relationship between the proportion of the county's population holding bachelor's degrees and proportion of women holding countywide office. The higher the education attained by the county, the proportion of women holding countywide office decreases. The correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level:  $r(67) = -.345$ . This relationship is one that is not expected. One would expect that a more highly educated population would be more likely to

produce a diverse leadership. Yet, it is possible that the higher attainment in education could be lost to a strong party system. Along the same lines as education, there is a similar negative bivariate relationship between the county's median household income and proportion of women holding countywide office. The correlation is not statistically significant, but it is negative with a Pearson's  $r(67) = -.233$ , which listed in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Correlations with Demographic Data

Percent of Women in County Elective Office	
Women's % in Labor Force Per County	.036
% Bachelor's Degree Per County	-.345**
Median Household Income Per County	-.233
% Non-Hispanic Whites Per County	.349**
% School Age Population	-.088
% Vote for Obama 2012	-.455**
N=	67

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Another explanation for the negative relationship between education and income to women holding county office has to do with the gender gap in party affiliation. From Crowder-Meyer's (2010) research we know that nationally Republican women hold fewer seats at the county level. Perhaps the statistical relationships described above are driven above by areas that are more Republican and produce Republican women candidates, just not at a rate that the Democratic Party does. To further support this possible explanation, we also know that there is a gender gap in officeholding at the state legislative level (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013). The areas with less education and lower income may produce more women candidates, as the Democratic Party is a bit stronger in areas where populations have traditionally been disenfranchised.

Another demographic variable tested is that of race. The proportion of population identified as non-Hispanic White is statistically significant and positively correlated with the proportion of women holding countywide office. The Pearson's coefficient is  $r(67) = .349, p < .01$ . It is important to note that most counties in Pennsylvania are majority white, non-Hispanic. Testing another variable offered by Palmer and Simon (2012) is that of school-age population. Again, the assumption is that if there are more school-aged children in the county, then that is a cue that families are living a more "traditional" lifestyle. The correlation between women's county officeholding and school-age population in the county is not statistically significant  $r(67) = -.088$ . However, the inverse relationship between the variables indicates that as there are more women in countywide office, the percent of school-age population is lower.

Lastly, the correlation between the county's vote for President Obama in 2012 and women's county officeholding is tested. While the relationship was significant at  $p < .01, r(67) = -.455$ , this relationship was not as expected. According to Palmer and Simon (2012) one would anticipate that the greater the vote garnered by President Obama, the more women officeholders would be present in the county. Yet that is not the case in Pennsylvania. Based upon my data collection, it seems that the more Republican the county, the greater the proportion of women's officeholding.

### *Political Party Strength*

As explained in Chapter 2, a strong political party organization is defined by the presence of three primary characteristics: a strong influence on the nomination of candidates, provides substantive services to the desired candidate(s), and offers an institutional presence in the community (e.g. headquarters, website, leadership) (Cotter et

al. 1984; Mayhew 1986; Sanbonmatsu 2006; Crowder-Meyer 2010). One of the most often cited institutional strengths that influences the nominations of candidates within a political party system is that of endorsement. When a political party endorses at the primary election, they are acting as gatekeepers to the electoral process. The endorsement process is one that generally requires campaign money to be spent on simply entering the endorsement process as well as insider knowledge of the party committee system to jockey for support. The endorsement is still considered to be an important step for candidates in Pennsylvania, as the endorsement often comes with candidates services, such as: volunteers, mailers on behalf of the candidate, help with fundraising, etc. Therefore, it is essential to test for a possible relationship between the party endorsement and proportion of women holding county office. In order to do so, a simple bivariate correlation was employed. As expected, a negative, statistically significant relationship was found between the two variables. The Pearson's coefficient is  $r(81) = -.244, p < .05$ . Based upon the scatterplot produced, it seems the higher the percentage of women holding county office the fewer instances there are of county party's making an endorsement.

Another sign of party strength is what services the organization can offer its candidates. Presumably, the stronger the party the more assistance they can offer their candidates. In order to test the correlation between women holding office and candidate services per party a summary measure was created. The PA County Party Leader survey asked respondents to "check all that apply" regarding a list of possible activities in assisting candidates. The list included: help meet nomination requirements, assist candidates with fundraising, contribute money directly to the candidate, organize

campaign events, create GOTV drives, conduct polls for candidates, share voter/donor lists, help with campaign website, create and mail campaign materials, create television ads for candidates, train candidates or campaign staff, and/or offer campaign advice and expertise. The new summary measure indicates the quantity of activities performed on behalf of candidates. The correlation of the two variables was found to be a statistically significant negative relationship. The Pearson's coefficient is  $r(83) = -.232, p < .05$ . The greater the support offered by the party correlates with having fewer women elected.

The third leg of political party strength is its institutional presence in the community. The presence of the party was captured by asking county party leaders if their organization had a website, headquarters year-round or during campaign season, and constitution/by-laws. These measures were combined to create one summary measure – the more structure the party had in place the higher the score. Again, based on prior research, it is expected that there is a negative relationship between the political party strength and recruitment of women candidates (Niven 1998; 2006). In this instance, a negative and statistically significant relationship occurs between the strength of the county party structure and the proportion of women in countywide office ( $r(83) = -.248, p < .05$ ). In sum, the greater the presence of the party, the fewer women holding county office.

Table 4.4 Correlations with Party Strength Variables

Percent of Women in County Elective Office	All	Dems	Repubs
Active in County Elections	-.068	-.233	.131
N=	85	44	41
Active in Local Elections	.097	.041	.160
N=	85	44	41
Party Endorsement	-.244*	-.157	-.340*
N=	83	43	40
Candidate Services	-.232*	-.278	-.166
N=	85	44	41

Institutional Presence (HQ, website, by-laws)	-.248*	-.233	-.310*
N=	85	44	41

Certainly, the statistically significant bivariate relationships are important in telling the story of what is related to women's officeholding patterns in Pennsylvania, yet it is also interesting to learn what is not a statistically significant relationship. Based upon prior work by Sanbonmatsu (2006) we know that the act of "gatekeeping" by the party can negatively impact the quantity of women's candidacies. Moreover, the qualitative portion of this dissertation found instances where county party leaders shared stories of actively deterring potential women candidates, not in a hostile manner, but rather out of "concern" about that woman's ability to balance her expected caretaking role<sup>55</sup> at home with the demands of the campaign trail. Thus, I expected to find a statistically significant, negative relationship between negative gatekeeping and women's representation in county government. However, the correlation was found *not* to be statistically significant. One explanation of this relationship could be that due to social desirability there are fewer explicit instances of deterrence and more covert instances that would not be mentioned. Moreover, the leaders in the interviews who did deter female candidates did not necessarily identify it as deterrence and more as "general advisement" due to the leaders' campaign experience. They believed that they were helping the woman candidate.

Another relationship that was expected to yield a statistically significant relationship is that of recruitment with the aid of "outside" organizations like women's groups, labor unions, gun owners, and community groups to name a few. According to

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<sup>55</sup> It is important to note here that in the interview data referred to, the party leader believed to be "helping" the potential woman candidate. The party leader did not see herself as maliciously being a negative gatekeeper, but the result of her concerns were that of deterrence.



Crowder-Meyer's (2010, 2013) research, it is by working with these groups that the recruitment of female candidates increases. Otherwise, she argues, that the party will only recruit from within, which is a rather insular process. Two sets of correlations were run to test the relationship: the summary measure of the volume of organizations each party works with to recruit candidates and that specifically of each group listed on the survey<sup>56</sup>. All variables were tested correlated against one another and produced below in a large matrix, Table 4.5, which can be found on the next page.

Neither the summary variable nor any individual group was found to be statistically significant with the proportion of women's officeholding. The disparity between Crowder-Meyer's (2010) work and my results may stem from a few possibilities. To begin, her work was done on a national scale, which increases the frequency and variation of such collaborations. Secondly, Pennsylvania still has the markers of a strong party state, thus, offering less diversity in working with outside groups (see Table 2.8). Outside groups, *right now*, do not seem to be making an impact on helping the parties recruit more women candidates.

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<sup>56</sup> The list of groups to choose from in the survey were: local party leaders, state party leaders, legislative leaders, chamber of commerce, labor unions, gun control, pro-choice, religious/church groups, gun owners, farmers, local community groups, medical community, teachers, tea party, pro-life, AARP, trial lawyers, women's groups, environmental groups, veterans, and firefighter/police groups.