

March 2020

## EXAMINING POLITICAL AMBITION: COMPETITION AND LEADERSHIP IN YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Ashley Staszak

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_theses](https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses)



Part of the [American Politics Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Staszak, Ashley, "EXAMINING POLITICAL AMBITION: COMPETITION AND LEADERSHIP IN YOUTH ACTIVITIES" (2020). *LSU Master's Theses*. 5083.

[https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_theses/5083](https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses/5083)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Scholarly Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Master's Theses by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Scholarly Repository. For more information, please contact [gradetd@lsu.edu](mailto:gradetd@lsu.edu).

**“EXAMINING POLITICAL AMBITION: COMPETITION AND  
LEADERSHIP IN YOUTH ACTIVITIES”**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for a degree of  
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Political Science

by  
Ashley Elizabeth Staszak  
B.A., Louisiana State University, 2018  
May 2020

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Why Women Don't Run.....	2
The Competitive Nature of Politics.....	3
Evaluating Risk and Decision Making.....	5
Role Model Effect.....	6
THEORY.....	9
HYPOTHESES.....	14
DATA AND METHODS.....	17
Survey.....	17
Dependent Variable.....	20
Independent Variables.....	21
ANALYSIS.....	24
Competition and Political Ambition.....	24
Leadership, Risk and Political Ambition.....	24
Role Model Theory and Political Ambition.....	25
Extracurricular Activities and Political Ambition.....	27
Results Summary.....	29
DISCUSSION.....	31
Next Steps.....	33
APPENDIX A. SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSE OPTIONS.....	36
APPENDIX B. OLS REGRESSION MODEL WITH MEN.....	40
APPENDIX C. IRB FORM.....	41
WORKS CITED.....	42
VITA.....	46

## List of Tables

1. Demographics of the sample .....	18
2. Frequencies of the Ambition Variables .....	19
3. OLS Regression estimates for the effect of extracurricular activities on women’s political ambition .....	26
Appendix B. OLS regression estimates for the effects of extracurricular activities on political ambition using male and female respondents .....	40

## **ABSTRACT**

Significant amounts of previous research focused on political ambition as a source of the gender gap in representation (Beyer and Bowden 1997; Pajares 2002; Fox 2010; Fox and Lawless 2014). This research looks to examine extracurricular activities (or after-school activities) and the effects they have on political ambition of girls as they grow up. Extracurricular activities provide girls access to competition, risk and female role models which can work to combat gender role socialization and other hindrances to running for political office. Using a survey of 300 undergraduate students at a large southern university, I measure the effect of extracurricular activities on political ambition using respondents' current political engagement and their interest in seeking political office. The models I run show that leadership roles in extracurricular activities can lead to an increase in political ambition in women. The amount of risk the respondent took in the activity had a negative and significant effect on ambition. Having a coach of the same sex had a negative and significant effect on political ambition.

## Introduction

Women have made significant strides in government since 2018. In 2018 alone, voters elected a record number of women to government offices all over the nation, including nine governors, 14 U.S. Senators, and 102 U.S. Representatives (CAWP 2019). As of November 2019, there are currently five women vying for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States in 2020 (CAWP 2019). Yet despite these advances, women are still underrepresented in the U.S. government. In fact, women only hold 25.4% of state legislature seats, barely reaching the one-quarter mark in 2018 (NCSL). The probability of women winning an election is comparable to the likelihood of men winning elections (Fox 2010). Thus, it appears to be an issue of supply: why are women not running for office in the same numbers as men? Scholars have conducted extensive research and proposed various theories to explain this discrepancy, some of which include women's perceptions of themselves, family obligations and socialization (Fox and Lawless 2010; Fox and Lawless 2014).

Significant amounts of previous research focused on political ambition as a source of the gender gap in representation (Beyer and Bowden 1997; Pajares 2002; Fox 2010; Fox and Lawless 2014). Wide-ranging research examined differences in political ambition between men and women using methods that range from surveys of women that explore the effects of competition to exposure to written treatment conditions to test role model theory (Fox and Lawless 2014; Schneider and Holman, forthcoming). The focus of this research is thus exploring this gap in political ambition in the hope of seeking a better understanding of why women run for office less than their male counterparts.

This research looks to examine extracurricular activities (or after-school activities) and the effects they have on political ambition of girls as they grow up. Previous research found that

extracurricular activities provide three contexts in which political ambition may be affected: competition, risk aversion and a female-dominated environment (Fox and Lawless 2010; Fox and Lawless 2014; Mariani et. al 2015; Sweet-Cushman 2016). This work will build upon the literature in political ambition. Extracurricular activities provide girls access to competition, risk and female role models which can work to combat gender role socialization and other hindrances to running for political office. Using a survey of 300 undergraduate students at a large southern university, I measure the effect of extracurricular activities on political ambition using respondents' current political engagement and their interest in seeking political office. I examine four main hypotheses in this research: (1) involvement in after school activities will increase the likelihood that a woman will show higher levels of political ambition, (2) the more competitive the activity, the more likely the respondent will show higher levels of political ambition, (3) if the respondent held a leadership position in any of the activities they were involved in, they will show higher levels of political ambition and (4) if the respondent was involved in an extracurricular activity that was led or coached by a woman, they will show higher levels of political ambition.

### *Why Women Don't Run*

Women often undervalue their own qualifications which can affect whether they see themselves as viable political candidates (Fox and Lawless 2010; Preece and Stoddard 2015; Schneider, Holman, Diekman and McAndrew 2016). Women's perceptions of themselves and their qualifications can depress their ambition, especially if they do not believe themselves to be as qualified as their male counterparts as Fox and Lawless (2010) see when they examine political ambition through numerous studies using the Citizen Political Ambition Panel Study.

Men are more likely to label themselves as ‘very qualified’ to both run for and hold political office (Fox and Lawless 2010). However, women rate themselves as less favorable than men regarding perception of their political skill (Fox and Lawless 2010). Beyond their perceptions of themselves as officeholders, men and women who have deemed themselves qualified to run do not view the political arena in the same way. As seen by Maxfield et. al (2010) when reviewing the literature, a woman’s belief or confidence in herself can contribute to whether they decide to take risks, including the pursuit of political office.

Family obligations can also prove to be a hindrance to seeking political office, especially for women who are often socialized from a young age to believe they belong in the private sphere of the home as opposed to the public sphere of politics (Healy and Malhotra 2013). Previous research has found that socialization has a significant effect on how adults engage politically later in their lives. As Fox and Lawless note in 2014, there has been considerable work on how socialization with family and friends influences women’s behaviors in politics, but more work on childhood factors will be necessary to further fill the gaps in our understanding of the gender differences in political ambition. Fulton, Maestas, Maisel and Stone (2006) find that women are more likely to delay seeking office until their personal and private matters do not conflict. However, as they age their ambition decreases, meaning that as they wait for their personal and private lives to allow them an opportunity to run for office, their desire to run declines.

### *The Competitive Nature of Politics*

In sports, a competition sees one team or person vying with another team or people to win a game, a title or some additional reward. Mayhew (1974) asserts that members of Congress



are "single-minded seekers of reelection" and so elections follow the same model as a sporting competition: multiple people or groups of people competing for a prize or reward, which in a political context is an elected office like a member of Congress or mayor. Specifically, Kanthak and Woon (2015) conclude that external forces, like funding or family, perception of abilities or risk aversion, cannot account for the gender gap in running for office. By eliminating these forces, they conclude that removing the aspects of campaigning should eliminate the gender gap in running for office. This suggests that women are averse to elections due to the competitive environment of running for office.

Previous research has shown that the competitive nature of politics to be a hinderance to women deciding to run for political office (Fox and Lawless 2014; Preece and Stoddard 2015; Holman, Diekman and McAndrew 2016). Competition also traces to how risk and decisions are evaluated differently in men and women. To begin, I examine the previous research on the political environment and competition to provide the correct context for this research's framing.

Fox and Lawless (2014) examine political ambition when women are in adolescence, finding that women are more likely to exhibit political ambition later in life if their parents encourage them, they participate in competitive events like sports and they exhibit high self-confidence. Men and women both rely on similar experiences like exposure to competitive events to determine their openness to politics. However, women are less likely to have those experiences than men are and therefore are less likely to determine based on those experiences that they would be open to pursuing candidacy for political office in the future (Fox and Lawless 2014). In contrast to what Fox and Lawless (2014) see in their work with competition acting as a positive force on political ambition, Preece and Stoddard (2015) find that the competitive political environment is more likely to negatively impact women when they understand the

nature of the political landscape and what political campaigns entail. This would suggest that the aggressive and competitive nature of politics can suppress a woman's ambition to seek political office (Preece and Stoddard 2015).

Schneider, Holman, Diekmann and McAndrew (2016) examine the way that a politician's motives for seeking office are defined, and like Preece and Stoddard, find that the competitive nature of politics affects women's political ambition. The public often views politicians as power-seekers, who hold significant value in the competition and self-promotion that comes with holding political office. Based on this definition of politicians, women are less politically ambitious because women often avoid conflict and confrontation, especially given the prominent role of conflict in politics.

### *Evaluating Risk and Decision Making*

Previous research has found that women will assess risk and make decisions differently than men do which further complicates the decision process (Byrnes et. al 1999; Maxfield et. al 2010; Sweet-Cushman 2016). Scholars observe risk aversion differences between men and women in everyday tasks like online shopping, as Garbarino and Strahilevitz (2004) find when examining the risk evaluations between women and men making purchases online or when driving as Rhodes and Pivik (2010) find when they see that male drivers are more likely to make riskier decisions than female drivers are. In a professional context, Carter et. al (2016) suggest from their results that risk aversion differences between men and women are a factor into why women in executive positions at S&P 1500 firms see lower salaries and compensation than male executives do.

The gender differences in risk evaluation and decision making coupled with the competitive nature of politics pose further and more complex considerations for women when they are determining whether to run for office. Sweet-Cushman (2016) examines political ambition psychologically through the lens of risk aversion and decision making. Women and men have different paths to what they deem successful and thus, these pathways pose different levels of risk (Sweet-Cushman 2016). Men and women will then assess these pathways differently because since women assess risk differently, as Sweet-Cushman (2016) found, women tend to be more risk averse and thus are less likely to pursue political office if they deem it too risky and not worth the potential danger associated with it (Byrnes et. al 1999). Maxfield et. al (2010) also sees the effects of risk evaluation on decision making in their work. Self-efficacy is a strong indicator of how women take risks and therefore, a woman's ability to believe in herself is crucial to what kind of risk they are willing to take. If a woman does not believe in herself, she is less likely to have the confidence to take a risk on running for political office.

Women already evaluate risks differently than men do and if they do not hold the self-confidence to take a risk, they will not. Since the competitive environment involves many risks including the exposure of one's family to media scrutiny, if a woman does not believe enough in herself, upon evaluation of the risks, she will not pursue political office.

### *Role Model Effect*

Of the three threads of research I examine here, the most extensively researched aspect is the role model theory. The role model effect examines whether having female role models affects the participation of young women in politics. Previous research suggests that women's

political ambition and engagement can become more evident when they have female role models play a role in their lives (Nixon and Robinson 1999; Mariani, Marshall and Mathews-Schultz 2015; Ladam, Harden and Windett 2018).

Schneider and Holman (forthcoming) examined the role model theory and though they do not find significant effects on political ambition from their single paragraph intervention, they do suspect that role model theory may have a greater and more significant impact from more frequent and in-depth interactions with a role model. Greenlee, Holman and VanSickle-Ward (2014) do see that there are significant effects on the political ambition of women when exposure to female role models frequently occurs when they are children. Nixon and Robinson (1999) find that having more female teachers and counselors when a female student is in high school will provide the students with female role models which they show has a positive impact on their future educational attainment. Further, Hermann et. al (2016) see a distinct difference in female STEM students when they receive direct communication from a role model that normalizes their concerns. While single or one-time exposure does not appear to be significant in changing or evoking political ambition, long term and direct communication has produced significant effects on ambition.

Politically, having high profile female role models in politics, like Sarah Palin, Hillary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi can translate to higher levels of political ambition as Mariani, Marshall and Mathews-Schultz (2015) see when they survey a group of 12th grade girls to measure anticipated political involvement levels in light of Clinton's, Pelosi's and Palin's candidacies. Their results suggest that having a high-profile female candidate provides girls a role model to look up to which can translate to higher levels of political involvement as an adult. Similarly, Ladam, Harden and Windett (2018) assess the effects of the election of Texas Governor Ann

Richards in 1990. After her election, women running for state legislature in Texas increased significantly, leading the authors to determine that high profile female candidates and politicians may affect women running for lower levels of office. Additionally, determining that seeing a woman in higher office as a form of symbolic representation is one, if not the largest, of the major factors influencing women to run for the state legislature. Visible female political candidates can also increase a girl's desire to become politically engaged later in their life (Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006). Specifically, a visible candidate can lead to more discussion in the home, girls being exposed to the political environment and drive a desire to become more politically active.

Based on the previous literature and research discussed in this section, I pose the following question: How does involvement in youth extracurricular activities (i.e. Girl Scouts, sports, student council) affect women's political ambition?

## Theory

Research on political ambition has focused primarily on uncovering various mechanisms that affect ambition in adults (Fox and Lawless 2010; Fox and Lawless 2014; Preece and Stoddard 2015; Mariani et. al 2015). While there has been significant research on how adolescent experiences affect political ambition, since people undergo the most development in their childhood, the events during this time can prove to be extremely influential in their adult lives (Healy and Malhotra 2013; Oxley 2017). It is this early point in their lives where children are learning to become more independent and are more impressionable to their surroundings. This is why this period of adolescence warrants more examination concerning the effects on political ambition. As the aforementioned previous research cited, there are often three characteristics of extracurricular activities that can explain the gender differences in political ambition: competition, risk aversion and exposure to more women (the role model effect).

What is it then about a child's experiences growing up that can make their political ambition look different from a neighbor or classmate? Further, what experiences can counter the socialized gender roles in children that can allow them to discover their political ambition later in life? The government requires that all children go to school from age five to at least the age of 17. However, unlike school, involvement in extracurricular activities is not mandatory. When given the opportunity to join, children can choose not to participate in activities like Little League or Girl Scouts. There is a wide range of activities, like sports, dance, gymnastics, Girl Scouts/Boy Scout or debate club that children have the opportunity to sign up for, or in some cases, their parent or guardian may sign them up for.

Gender roles developed in response to women and men's roles as caregivers and breadwinners, respectively, according to social role theory (Eagly 1987; Eagly et al. 2000). The

biological capacity of men and women as well as the need to survive created these social roles (Eagly 1987; Eagly et al. 2000). Since the time of Neanderthals, men held the roles of ensuring safety, conducting business and securing resources, while women cared for the children and prepared meals. These roles carried on relatively unchallenged throughout time from Medieval times through the start of the Industrial Revolution, until recently when more women have become breadwinners and work to secure resources (Eagly 1987; Eagly et al. 2000). Gender roles established the belief that men have agency, while women are associated with communion. Agency is what makes men power-seeking and competitive while the communion within women makes them nurturing caregivers of others (Eagly and Steffen 1984; Fiske et al. 2002).

Parents are one of the most significant factors in how children grow up socialized about their gender roles and positions. From birth, the toys children play with as well as the colors and clothing that they wear, socialize them to behave in gender-conforming ways (Almy and Sanatullora-Allison 2016; MacPhee and Prendergast 2019; Rheingold and Cook 1975). Parents will fill their sons' rooms with sports, military and car-themed toys, while girls' rooms have toys that promote household activities like cooking and cleaning (MacPhee and Prendergast 2019; Rheingold and Cook 1975). Even the chores that parents assign their children can socialize them. Girls more often receive chores assignments within the house, like cleaning whereas the boys will likely receive chores outside like lawn work. Parents can transmit their expectations about their children's gender roles through the differing chores that they assign to boys and girls (Blakemore and Hill 2008). The assignment of chores and toy choices by parents reinforces at a young age, the stereotype that women belong in the home or private sphere while men belong outside the home, in the public sphere.

Schools also become a critical socializing factor for children when they are old enough to start attending (Auhadeeva et, al 2015). School becomes the place where gender roles become more solidified in a child's mind (Almy and Sanatullora-Allison 2016). Similar to parents, teachers will transfer their expectations about gender roles to their students by reinforcing gender appropriate behavior and punishing inappropriate behavior (Erden 2010). Boys are more likely to assert themselves in school by calling out when they know the answer to a question, while girls will wait with their hands raised (Sadker and Sadker 1991). Coupled with the conclusions of Erden (2010), teachers who are less likely to correct these types of assertive behaviors will embed these behaviors into the children, since they confirm the teachers' gender role expectations.

Research has found that parents are more likely to sign their sons up for competitive activities while they are more likely to sign girls up for activities that mostly involve socializing with their peers (Jacobs and Eccles 1992). These behaviors embed the idea into girls' heads that they do not belong in competitive activities. Previous research has found that competition is a hinderance to women who may consider running for office, this is especially true if they have never been exposed to a competitive environment before. Since women are less likely to participate in competitive activities as early in their lives as college, it becomes extremely important to the development of their political ambition if they are exposed to competitive activities and environments at an early age (Fox and Lawless 2014). Extracurricular activities provide women a means for exposure to a competitive environment and since Fox and Lawless (2014) conclude that women are less likely to have experiences that could open them up to politics, it makes extracurricular activity involvement as an adolescence even more important for women to discover their openness to political engagement. Involvement in extracurricular



activities can work to combat the socialization that women do not belong in competition by allowing them access to and participation in these competitive arenas. It will also provide girls with early exposure to the competitive environment which will increase a woman's familiarity with competition, so if they decide to enter the political field later in life, it is less of an uncertainty or an unknown.

Parents are more likely to permit boys to take risks that may lead to injury than they would girls (Morrongiello and Hogg 2004). Since previous research has found that men and women evaluate risk and make decisions differently, exposing girls to opportunities to take risk and make critical decisions through sports or clubs can work to combat the aversion to risk that women feel due to the lack of capability to take risks as children (Byrnes et. al 1999; Sweet-Cushman 2016). In conjunction with more exposure to the competitive environment, extracurricular activities in grade school will work to eliminate some of the uncertainty associated with competition as well as other negative perceptions about politics. Therefore, women will be less averse to taking a risk on running for political office based on the uncertainty of the environment they would be entering. Clubs and organizations can provide students the ability to take risks, like proposing a new idea or a plan, that will not have life-changing consequences, like driving a car or making a risky investment would. Student council can provide students the ability to take a chance and run for an officer or government-like role that will not significantly impact their lives in the future like running for political office as an adult can.

When an authority figure like a teacher brings attention to the status of ingroups, children are more likely to form ingroup biases early in life (Bigler et. al 2001). However, role models of the same sex can weaken women's perceptions of stereotypes about ingroups that are in typically

masculine fields, where the ingroups are men (Dasgupta and Asgari 2004). Having a female role model works to benefit women since it can provide them with the ability to imagine themselves in fields that have typically been labeled masculine, like politics. Further, having someone to look up to, a role model, which may be a coach, staff member or teammate, gives rise to clearer political ambition in a woman as an adult (Mariani, Marshall and Mathews-Schultz 2015; Ladam, Harden and Windett 2018). Specifically, role models can significantly affect political ambition when there is long term exposure and interaction with the role model as opposed to short term or single interaction with a female role model or candidate for political office. (Stout et. al 2011). Being involved in an extracurricular activity can allow for long term exposure to a female role model in the form of a coach, staff member who leads a club or another female teammate. Therefore, the presence of more women, specifically a role model will work to make woman's political ambition clearer.

## Hypotheses

**H1:** Female respondents who indicated involvement in extracurricular activities are more likely to show higher levels of political ambition than female respondents who were not involved in extracurricular activities.

Overall, based on the theory above, I expect that women involved in extracurricular activities will show higher levels of political ambition. The extracurricular activities expose women to competitive environments, risk and female role models. For example, a woman, who held the position of team captain on her female-led, middle school soccer team, was exposed to a competitive environment where she held a leadership position that allowed her to take risks all while having a female role model in her coach to look up to. I expect that exposure to all of these elements (competition, leadership roles and role models) will produce higher levels of political ambition in this woman as an adult, since these elements will counteract the hinderances women encounter when entering the political realm.

**H2:** Female respondents who indicated involvement in highly competitive extracurricular activities are more likely to show higher levels of political ambition than female respondents who indicated involvement in extracurricular activities that were not as competitive.

Since variation exists among the level of competitiveness in various activities, the higher the level of competition the respondent is exposed to, the higher political ambition they will indicate. Higher levels of competition will work better to combat women's aversion to competition than activities that have low levels of competition. Competition can vary from one activity to another. For example, sports produce more competitive environments than perhaps a yearbook club, since winning is the goal of a soccer or baseball game. Therefore, I expect that a woman involved in a

sport as a girl would exhibit higher levels of political ambition than a woman who was in the yearbook club.

**H3:** Female respondents who held a leadership position in any of the activities they were involved in will show higher levels of political ambition than female respondents who were involved in extracurricular activities, but did not hold a leadership position.

Leadership roles can expose women to more responsibility and risk-taking behaviors as leadership positions can be voluntary or via election. Even if they are optional, these positions require a risk in volunteering for them. Leadership roles that require election expose women to another risk, that of running for the position and losing. Since risk aversion is often a deterrent to political office, holding a leadership position will counter this and thus respondents will exhibit higher levels of political ambition. For example, holding the position of captain on a sports team or president of a club allows others to look to them for guidance and leadership. Leadership roles will also expose them to decision-making and risk-taking, since they will need to consider options and opinions of others around them.

**H4:** Female respondents who were involved in extracurricular activities that were led/coached by a female will show higher levels of political ambition than female respondents who were involved in extracurricular activities that were led/coached by a male.

The previous research cited above concludes that female role models work to counter in-group bias that women hold in masculine environments. The presence of a female coach or leader will assist in this idea so women who had a female coach/leader in their activities will show higher levels of political ambition.

For example, a female coach of a girls' soccer team likely has experience playing on a girls' soccer team so she can understand the dynamics of the girls better than a male coach, who has

likely played with other males, would. This allows the coach to relate more to who she is coaching and form a bond with her team. She can also relay her own experiences, so that the team can look up to her.

## **Data and Methods**

### *Survey*

The methodology of this research is a survey designed to assess the relationship between political ambition and extracurricular activities. The survey will consist of three blocks of questions: extracurricular activities, political ambition and demographics. Using a university system that allows students to earn course credit, I distributed the anonymous survey to undergraduate and graduate students at a large university in the southern region of the United States. The goal number of respondents was 200 students.

The first block of questions asked respondents about their extracurricular involvement from elementary to high school, specifically what activities they were involved in, how old they were when they started and how long they were involved with the activities. Within this set, the survey also asks respondents if they held any leadership role in the activities, if the activities were competitive, how often they took risks (like speaking up in, running for a leadership role, etc) and whether the coach/staff member that led the activity was the same sex as the respondent. I designed these specific questions to touch on the three threads in which research has found extracurricular activity involvement can affect political ambition.

In the second question block, respondents answer questions designed to measure their political ambition. This block includes questions on the respondent's current level of political involvement, like how often they vote, how recently they have voted and if they donate money or their time to a party or candidate. Since the core of respondents is undergraduate students who have likely never run for political office, these questions measure their desire to run for office based on whether they may run for office either at the current university (for a student government position) or later in their lives after college.

The final block of questions is demographic questions on sex, race, education and the area of the country they are from. The goal of the questions in this survey is to test for effects of political ambition based on specific demographics as well as measuring the gender gap between men and women. (See Appendix A for the full survey questions and response options.)

Table 1. Demographics of the sample

Demographics	
Female <sup>1</sup>	85%
White	82%
Age (Mean)	20
Republican	37%
Democrat	32%
Independent	27%
South	92%
Single	61%
Junior	32%
Senior	32%
Mass communication majors (PR, digital advertising, journalism, political communication)	79%
N = 307	

Table 1 presents the demographics of the sample of respondents. A majority of respondents were white and female. Most were upperclassmen (juniors and seniors) and most of them identified their major of study within the field of mass communication. There were more self-identified Republicans than Democrats and nearly all respondents are from the southern part of the United States. Though the data may present some limitations from the demographics of the sample, over 80% of the sample being women strengthens the ability to test the hypotheses. Since over 80% of the respondents also identified as white, it can prevent in-depth examination of minorities and intersectionality. Most of the respondents hailing from the South does also

<sup>1</sup> An initial goal of this research was to also compare men's and women's ambition, however since there was such a small number of men in the sample, it was not feasible.

potentially create a limitation in generalizability, however examining a population of mostly Southern residents allows for a conservative test of the theory, given that the South is one of the most politically and socially conservative regions in the United States.

It is also important to note here that the involvement in extracurricular activities, which nearly all respondents were involved in, is a privilege that may speak to the socioeconomic status of their families since these activities required additional resources, like equipment, and time to participate. Many families may not have the financial or time resources to allow their children to participate in these activities. Since this pool of respondents is from a college campus, the fact that 99% of respondents participated in extracurricular activities may also speak to the necessity of these kinds of activities on a resume or application to get accepted into a college or university.

Table 2. Frequencies of the Ambition Variables

	Considered running for office?	Consider running for office in the future?	Consider running if approached to do so?	Likelihood of running for office in the future?
Yes/Likely	19.22%	19.22%	33.55%	33.55%
Maybe/neither likely nor unlikely	17.26%	21.17%	31.27%	9.45%
No/Unlikely	63.52%	59.61%	35.18%	57%

As a way to measure political ambition levels of respondents, the main dependent variable in this research, I asked four questions of the respondents. The first was if they had ever considered running for political office at the university they attended. The second was if they would ever consider running for office in the future. The third question was if they would ever consider running for office if they were approached by someone to do so. The final question on



ambition was the likelihood that the respondent would run for office in the future. As seen in Table 2, for every question asked, more respondents were not planning to or were not likely to run for political office in the future than the number of respondents who would run or were likely to run for political office. The number of respondents who would not or were unlikely to run for office ranged from 35% to 63%, nearly two-thirds of the sample. The question of whether the respondent would run for office showed the evenest distribution of the four questions, with about a third of respondents indicating, yes, maybe or no to whether they would run for office if approached to do so. The same number of respondents (19.22%) were likely or planning to run for office at their current university or were considering running for political office in the future. The same number of respondents (33.55%) also indicated a likelihood to pursue office in the future and if they were approached to do so.

### *Dependent Variable*

The main goal of this research is to determine whether involvement in extracurricular activities would lead to women reporting higher levels of political ambition. Within the survey used to gather data, I asked multiple questions of the respondents to gauge their level of political ambition, as discussed in the previous section. Of the questions I asked, I employ one of these questions in the models that will follow since there was no difference in the models when I used the four questions to create a scale. The question used in the following models was "Would you consider running for political office in the future?" There were five responses available to respondents: definitely yes, probably yes, might or might not, probably not and definitely not. This question allowed me to measure whether respondents would consider running for office in the future, since the pool of respondents is college students, it was unlikely that they were

currently running for any elected position in government. I coded the responses to this question so that a "definitely yes" or "probably yes" was corresponding to a higher value and thus should lead to higher levels of ambition.

### *Independent Variables*

I theorize that there are three aspects of extracurricular activities that can contribute to affecting political ambition in women: competition, leadership and role models. Competition, leadership roles and role models all work to combat different aspects of the political experience that may hinder a woman from running for elected office, which is why I use three specific models to test these mechanisms separately. I then combine all of the variables into one overall model. Competition exposure through extracurricular activities works to combat the apprehension that women have to competitive political environment, while leadership roles expose girls to risk-taking behaviors that may prevent them from being as risk averse later in life. Role models work to combat the ingroup bias that prevents women from seeing themselves in a male-dominated field.

To test the effect of competition, I use two variables to test whether competition had a positive impact on political ambition. The first of which was the competitive activities respondents were involved in growing up. I coded the write-in responses as either competitive, civic or other. I then combined the competitive write-in responses with the sports, student council and debate categories since I also labeled these activities as competitive. Nearly 92% of respondents were involved in at least one competitive activity. The second variable used was the level of competitiveness the respondent indicated that the activities they were involved with were. These values ranged from 'very competitive' to 'not really that competitive.'

The second aspect of extracurricular activities I theorize affects political ambition is holding a leadership position in an extracurricular activity. To examine this, I use two different independent variables. The first is whether respondents held a leadership role in any of the activities they were involved in with response options of 'yes,' 'no' and 'don't remember.' For the purposes of examining this hypothesis, I combine the 'no' responses and the 'don't remember' responses into one response to generate a dichotomous variable. The second variable I used was whether they took many risks in the activity or activities they were involved in. Since I theorize that leadership roles allow women exposure to risk-taking decisions and behaviors, I use this as a measure of risk-taking. The responses to this question range from 'a great deal' of risk to 'none at all.'

The final specific aspect of extracurricular activities that I examine is whether having a female coach/leader in extracurricular activities would lead to higher levels of political ambition. I use two independent variables to specifically test the impact of having a female coach/leader. The first variable I use asks respondents whether the coach or leader of their activity was the same sex as the respondent identified. Since my specific examination is on women, had they had a female leader/coach, they would answer yes. This variable had three potential responses: 'yes,' 'no' and 'don't remember' and again for testing this hypothesis, I combined the 'no' responses with the 'don't remember' responses to create a dichotomous variable. The second variable I use to test role model theory is whether the activity was co-ed or not. Like the variable of whether the coach/leader was the same sex as the respondent, this variable had three potential response: 'yes,' 'no' and 'don't remember' and again for testing this hypothesis, I combined the 'no' responses with the 'don't remember' responses to create a dichotomous variable.

Since I theorize that extracurricular activities provide women with all three of these aspects that could lead to higher levels of political ambition, the three sets of independent variables from the specific models are tested together against the primary dependent variable discussed in the preceding section. I start with the specific models that tested each aspect of extracurricular activities and their impact on ambition before I use all of the independent variables from each specific model in one overall model to test the effect of them combined. I use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to test each of the models discussed here. Every model includes the same control variables: the length of time the respondent spent in the extracurricular activity or activities (in years), how old they were when they started participating in the activity, a dichotomous variable of whether the respondent was white or not, their academic classification (freshman, sophomore, etc.), the political party the respondent identifies with, the region of the country they are from and their age.

## **Analysis**

### *Competition and Political Ambition*

Based on what I theorize, I hypothesized that involvement in competitive activities would lead to higher levels of political ambition in women. If my hypothesis is supported, I expect that as the number of competitive activities the respondent was involved in increased and the level of competition in the activity or activities increased, the respondent would be more likely to indicate a higher level of political ambition. The results in Table 3, Column 1 show a positive, yet insignificant effect on ambition for involvement in competitive activities ( $p = 0.119$ ) and a negative, insignificant effect based on the level of competition ( $p = 0.410$ ). When the number of activities the respondent was involved in increased, they were more likely to indicate higher levels of political ambition. Political ambition was negatively impacted by the level of competitiveness the respondent indicated their activities were. Specifically, as the activities became more competitive, respondents were more likely to indicate lower levels of political ambition. Again, this variable did not reach the level of statistical significance.

I hypothesized that competition through extracurricular activities would lead to higher levels of political ambition in women. The regression results show that the effect of competition, as measured using two independent variables, on political ambition does not reach the level of statistical significance to provide support for my hypothesis. I continue examining other facets of extracurricular activities in the following two models on leadership roles and role model theory.

### *Leadership, Risk and Political Ambition*

Continuing my examination of extracurricular activities' effect on political ambition, the next model examines whether leadership roles obtained through extracurricular activity

involvement lead to changes in political ambition. I hypothesized that holding a leadership position in an extracurricular activity or activities would lead to higher levels of political ambition in women. If my hypothesis is supported, I expect that if the respondent held a leadership position and the amount of risk the respondent took in the activity or activities increased, the respondent would be more likely to indicate a higher level of political ambition. The results, presented in Table 3, Column 2, do show a positive and significant effect on ambition for holding a leadership role ( $p=0.054$ ) and a negative, significant impact based on the amount of risk ( $p=0.000$ ). Since the two variables show opposing relationships with political ambition, these results provide mixed support for the hypothesis that leadership roles lead to higher levels of political ambition. Respondents who held leadership roles in their activities were significantly more likely to exhibit higher levels of political ambition than respondents who did not hold leadership roles. Specifically, political ambition increased by 0.326 on the 5-point scale used as the measure of political ambition. When it came to the amount of risk, as it increased, respondents indicated significantly less political ambition than respondents who experienced lower levels of risk in their activities. For every one unit increase in the amount of risk the respondent took in their activities, there was a 0.237 decrease in political ambition based on the 5-point scale used to measure ambition ( $p=0.000$ ).

### *Role Model Theory and Political Ambition*

My final specific model examined the effect of having a female role model in extracurricular activities on political ambition. I hypothesize that having a female coach or leader will lead to higher levels of political ambition in female respondents. If my hypothesis is supported, female respondents who had a female coach will exhibit higher levels of political

Table 3. OLS Regression estimates for the effect of extracurricular activities on women's political ambition

	<u>Competition</u>	<u>Leadership/Risk</u>	<u>Role Model</u>	<u>Overall</u>
Level of competition	-0.082 (0.099)	-	-	-0.032 (0.097)
Competitive activities	0.154 (0.099)	-	-	0.112 (0.099)
Leadership role	-	0.326 (0.169*)	-	0.248 (0.175)
Level of risk	-	-0.237 (0.062***)	-	-0.237 (0.062***)
Same sex coach/leader	-	-	-0.358 (0.146*)	-0.301 (0.143*)
Co-ed activity	-	-	0.197 (0.151)	0.121 (0.150)
Activity length	0.096 (0.126)	0.049 (0.120)	0.163 (0.119)	0.018 (0.124)
Start age	0.108 (0.067)	0.099 (0.065)	0.086 (0.067)	0.099 (0.065)
White	0.208 (0.220)	0.332 (0.216)	0.236 (0.218)	0.338 (0.215)
Academic classification	-0.152 (0.111)	-0.151 (0.107)	-0.124 (0.110)	-0.155 (0.107)
Republican	0.262 (0.177)	0.242 (0.171)	0.310 (0.175*)	0.257 (0.171)
Democrat	0.502 (0.188**)	0.606 (0.185***)	0.542 (0.186**)	0.596 (0.184***)
South	-0.822 (0.454*)	-0.933 (0.473*)	-0.838 (0.450*)	-0.907 (0.476*)
Age	-0.066 (0.069)	-0.077 (0.066)	-0.096 (0.068)	-0.083 (0.067)

\*\*\*p < .001

\*\* p < .01

\* p < .10

ambition than respondents who had a male coach or leader. The results from the regression model presented in Table 3, Column 3 show the opposite relationship. According to the regression results, having a female coach or leader leads to significantly less political ambition than respondents who had a male coach or leader in their extracurricular activity ( $p=0.015$ ) and the activity being co-ed led to a positive, yet insignificant effect on women's political ambition ( $p=0.194$ ). Female respondents who had a female coach or leader indicated their level of political ambition to be 0.358 lower on the 5-point ambition scale than female respondents who had a male coach or leader in their extracurricular activities.

#### *Extracurricular Activities and Political Ambition*

The previous three models work as the set up for the final, overall model. This model tests the effect of extracurricular activities on political ambition based on competition, leadership roles and role model theory. I use all of the independent variables from the previous three models as a means to test this model.

I hypothesize that women who were involved in extracurricular activities growing up will exhibit higher levels of political ambition as adults, specifically through exposure to competitive environments, holding leadership positions and having a female role model. The results are presented in Table 3, Column 4. The two variables used for measuring competition: the number of competitive activities the respondent was involved in and the level of competition in those activities each show a similar effect on political ambition in this model as they did in the competition model. The number of competitive activities does produce a positive effect on political ambition ( $p=0.261$ ), while the level of competition produces a negative impact on political ambition ( $p=0.742$ ). In this model, neither of these variables reaches statistical



significance. The two variables used to measure leadership roles: holding a leadership position and the amount of risks the respondent took to show a similar directional effect on political ambition in this model as they do in the leadership and risk model discussed earlier. Respondents who held a leadership position in their extracurricular activities were more likely to exhibit higher levels of political ambition ( $p=0.159$ ). As the amount of risk the respondent took increased, their level of political ambition decreased ( $p=0.000$ ). Like the individual model on leadership, risk showed statistically significant effects on political ambition, yet holding a leadership position was not significant in this model. The variables used to measure role model theory: whether the coach or leader of the activity was the same sex as the respondents and whether the activity was co-ed, shows a similar effect to the one produced in the role model theory model. Having a coach of the same sex, for female respondents, negatively affected their political ambition and like in the previous model, this effect was statistically significant ( $p=0.037$ ). The extracurricular activity being co-ed had a positive yet insignificant effect on political ambition ( $p=0.420$ ).

Upon running these models, three of my main independent variables have shown statistically significant relationships with political ambition. Holding a leadership role in an extracurricular activity is shown in these models to lead to an increase in political ambition, while risk and female role models have led to a decrease in political ambition. Leadership roles may allow girls the opportunity to gain self-confidence and the ability to believe in themselves which can translate to the belief that they can run for office or participate in politics. Risk and female role models are statistically significant in the opposite direction of what I hypothesize, meaning risk and female role models cause a decrease in political ambition. The negative relationship with risk may be attributed to the effect of mere exposure to risk has. It may be that

once a girl encounters risk or risk-taking opportunities, she is less inclined to want to be involved in activities that may lead her to be exposed to these types of behaviors and decisions again. Encounters or impressions with role models may also explain those results in the same way it may explain the risk results. Some girls may not have developed a memorable or substantial relationship with their coaches or leaders. In some cases, they may have had a bad experience or adversarial relationship with a coach or leader that made them feel alienated. The potential for this negative relationship may reinforce the stereotypes of male-dominated environments like politics and can confirm ingroup bias, as opposed to combatting them as role model theory would suggest.

### *Results Summary*

When just examining competition alone, both involvement in a competitive activity, as well as the level of competitiveness, had an insignificant effect on political ambition. The amount of risk the respondent took in their activity had a negative and significant effect on political ambition, while holding a leadership role in the activity had a positive and significant effect on political ambition. The final specific model examined the variables testing role model theory alone. When considering role model theory alone, having a coach of the same sex had a negative and significant impact on political ambition, while the activity being co-ed led to a positive, but insignificant effect on ambition. The overall model tested whether extracurricular activities had an effect on political ambition using competition, role model and risk variables that are examined individually in the previous models. Overall, involvement in a competitive activity has a positive, yet insignificant effect on political ambition. The level of competition, ranging from not competitive at all to very competitive, had a negative and insignificant effect on

political ambition. Holding a leadership role in an activity had a positive, insignificant effect on political ambition, while the amount of risk the respondent took in the activity had a negative and significant effect on ambition. Having a coach of the same sex, which examined role model theory, had a negative and significant effect on political ambition. Yet, the activity being co-ed was positive, but insignificant.

## Discussion

The results presented here do not fully support the importance of extracurricular activities and their effect on political ambition. These mixed results may be a product of the data available as well as the sample of respondents, therefore the importance of extracurricular activities cannot be entirely dismissed. The models and their results, while they all did not provide significant results in the ways I hypothesize, do highlight how competition, leadership roles and role models operate differently. Based on the coefficients of each of the main independent variables, the relationship that each mechanism has with political ambition is different. The variables in each of the three specific models and the overall model do not move in the same direction, meaning they do not all have a positive or negative effect on political ambition.

The models I run here show that leadership roles in extracurricular activities can lead to an increase in political ambition in women. As adolescence, extracurricular activities, since they encompass sports, clubs and other teams, maybe the best option that girls have to hone these leadership skills. From the data I collect, nearly 99% of female respondents indicated they participated in extracurricular activities growing up. Participation in extracurricular activities may be a product of the college application process, where students will have to appear well rounded in and outside of school to gain admissions and potential funding. With most jobs now requiring higher education beyond high school, students will need to seek resume-boosting activities, which in turn can expose them to leadership roles. Through these leadership roles, girls can gain confidence in themselves, have the opportunity to present their ideas and organize other people to accomplish a specific task. The payoff for involvement in extracurricular activities could well exceed admission to a college or university. The study of political ambition has traditionally focused on the political context of roles in government, like an elected office.

However, this does not dismiss the impact that this research has on leadership roles outside of politics. In this study, I conclude that political ambition is positively impacted by women's involvement in leadership roles while in extracurricular activities. Self-confidence and the ability to organize other people around a goal are resume and character-building skills that can allow women the opportunity to stand out for job opportunities, promotion and raises. Obtaining leadership skills in extracurricular activities can establish a foundation for students to obtain leadership roles in their post-education employment in the public or private sectors.

The null results, here specifically regarding competition seem to discount the conclusions of Fox and Lawless (2014) who find that exposure to competitive environments significantly increase a woman's political ambition. While the level of competition has an insignificant effect, the direction of the relationship is negative, meaning that as the level of competition increased, the respondent was more likely to indicate lower levels of political ambition. The sample size or respondent pool may be the cause of this disconnect between my conclusions and Fox and Lawless' conclusions. Additionally, the impact of these activities on the respondent may have affected the results from the models I ran. If the respondent did not take anything away from the activity or activities they were involved in or they did not have a pleasant experience while involved in them, it may prime them to already dislike competition which in turn, according to what I theorize could negatively impact their political ambition. If the respondents did not enjoy the activities that they were in, whether it was because they generally did not like the activity or they had a bad experience, they might be inclined to avoid all environments that remind them of that experience, which if the activity was competitive may include politics. Whether the activity or activities had an impact on the respondent may also be able to explain why female respondents who had female coaches were not significantly more politically ambitious. If the

coach or leader did not have an impact on the respondent, the respondent may have indicated lower levels of political ambition. Like with competition, respondents may have had a bad or adversarial relationship with their coach or leader in that they did not see them as a role model or someone to look up to for guidance. Female role models may also not have the level of legitimacy that male role models can provide. It may be that men telling girls and women that they are good at something or providing them with positive reinforcement is more effective than it is coming from a woman. This may be especially true of male dominated arenas like sports and politics. Future research can explore the legitimacy of male and female role models, with emphasis on political ambition.

In all four of my models, respondents who identified as Democrats were significantly more likely to indicate higher levels of political ambition, whereas this only occurred in one of the models for respondents identifying as Republicans. This may be a result of the progressive values of the Democratic Party and the less emphasis that Democrats put on traditional gender roles. The Democratic Party is known to have more progressive values that may put less emphasis on the traditional gender roles that women belong in the home and not in public. The Republican Party is the party of conservative social and political values, which may include reinforcing gender roles that depress women's ambition.

### *Next Steps*

As with many studies, this research does have its limitations that future research should look to expand upon. The data available poses limitations to the sample based on where in the United States I was able to collect it, as well as the population the sample of respondents come from generationally. Because I collected my data on a college campus, it limited the diversity of

respondents to participants ranging between the ages of 18-22. Since the average age of the respondents was about 20 years old, it may be that at this current age, they are not currently considering running for political office or may not see themselves running for office in the future right now. Since the respondents in this data are in college, they may change their mind on what they want to study or what they want to do with their lives numerous times throughout their time in college. That does not mean that they will absolutely not run for political office ever. Some of the respondents who indicated they were less likely to run for office may find themselves running for office sometime in the future, however at the time they answered the survey, they had no interest in or could not see themselves running for office.

I conducted this survey in the southern region of the U.S. where most of the respondents hailed from, which limited the perspective of respondents from other regions of the country that may have had different cultural experiences than those in the South. The southern region of the country, in general is more politically and socially conservative, so respondents hailing from the South may have been raised on the traditional values that women belong in the private sphere within the home, which could act a means to stifle their political ambition regardless of their involvement in competitive activities. Future research should expand upon this examination with a more nationally representative sample, in age and region. People from different generations and areas of the country are raised on different norms and traditions, therefore, further research is necessary to examine the variations among regions and generations that could provide insight into how political ambition is developed and grown in adolescence.

We know from the responses provided in this research that there are numerous kinds of extracurricular activities that children may have the opportunity to participate in. This research has also shown that leadership roles have a significant, positive impact on political ambition.

Some extracurricular activities, like girls scouts or other academic clubs, may provide girls with more opportunities in leadership roles that can prepare them beyond the school environment.

Further research should examine the impact of various types of extracurricular activities and how they impact political ambition, with a specific focus on leadership roles.

As more women are entering the political field to seek elected office, universities, parties and political figures are founding campaign training organizations to assist potential candidates with gaining the skills and resources so that they have the best chance at being successful in their race. This research can provide insights into how to better train potential political candidates.

Within this study, the models have established that leadership roles in extracurricular activities are significantly effective in increasing a woman's political ambition. To harness this ambition, campaign training organizations should seek to enhance the skills that these leadership roles have provided to women. Skills that may include the presentation of their ideas, as well as the organization of people around a common goal, which in the case of the candidate would be getting elected. Campaign training organizations should also seek to boost self-confidence since previous research has found that if a woman is not confident in herself, she is less likely to take risks, which would include running for office (Byrnes et. al 1999; Sweet-Cushman 2016).

Providing female candidates these skills and boosting their self-confidence is especially crucial if they do not have previous exposure through leadership roles in youth extracurricular activities.



## Appendix A. Survey Questions and Response Options

- Extracurricular Activities
  - Q1 Did you participate in extracurricular activities in elementary, middle and/or high school?
    - Yes (1)
    - No (2)
  - Q2 Check off all of the activities that you have participated in in elementary, middle and/or high school.
    - Drama Club (1)
    - Yearbook Club (2)
    - Student Council (3)
    - Sports (Football, baseball/softball, basketball, etc) (4)
    - Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts (5)
    - Debate Club (6)
    - Other: (7) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Q3 Did your parent sign you up for these activities or did you ask to participate in them?
    - My parent signed me up (1)
    - I wanted to participate (2)
    - Not sure (3)
  - Q4 How active were your parents in encouraging you in the activities?
    - A great deal (1)
    - A lot (2)
    - A moderate amount (3)
    - A little (4)
    - None at all (5)
  - Q5 Were any of the activities you participated in competitive?
    - Very competitive (1)
    - Somewhat competitive (6)
    - A little bit competitive (3)
    - Not really that competitive (4)
  - Q6 Was the sport or club co-ed?
    - Yes (1)
    - No (2)
    - I don't remember (3)
  - Q7 Was the leader/coach of the activity the same sex as you?
    - Yes (1)
    - No (2)
    - I don't remember (3)
  - Q8 At what age did you begin the activity?
    - 3-5 (1)

- 6-8 (2)
  - 9-11 (3)
  - 12-14 (4)
  - 15-18 (5)
- Q9 How long were you involved in the activity?
  - Less than a year (1)
  - 1-2 years (2)
  - 3-4 years (3)
  - 5 or more years (4)
- Q10 Did you ever hold a leadership position as a part of the activity?
  - Yes (1)
  - No (2)
  - I don't remember (3)
- Q11 What leadership position did you hold?
  - Captain (1)
  - President (2)
  - Vice President (3)
  - Secretary (4)
  - Treasurer (5)
- Q12 Are you currently involved in any activities/sports/clubs at LSU?
  - Yes (1)
  - No (2)
- Display This Question: If Are you currently involved in any activities/sports/clubs at LSU? = Yes
- Q Please select the activities you are currently involved with at LSU.
  - Greek life (sorority or fraternity) (1)
  - Student government (2)
  - Academic clubs (3)
  - Other: (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- Q13 How often did you take risks (proposing a new idea, challenging or debating another person, etc.) during the activity?
  - A great deal (1)
  - A lot (2)
  - A moderate amount (3)
  - A little (4)
  - None at all (5)
- Political Ambition
  - Q14 Did you vote in the last election?
    - Yes (1)
    - No (2)
  - Q15 Please select the political activities you have engaged in.
    - Contacted an elected official (1)

- Contributed money to a campaign or elected official (2)
  - Attended a government meeting/legislative session (3)
  - Attended a political rally or event (4)
  - Worked or volunteered for a campaign or elected official (5)
  - Ran for political office (6)
  - None (7)
  - Other: (8) \_\_\_\_\_
- Q16 Have you ever considered running for political office like student government on LSU's campus?
  - Yes (1)
  - Maybe (2)
  - No (3)
- Q17 Would you consider running for political office in the future?
  - Definitely yes (1)
  - Probably yes (2)
  - Might or might not (3)
  - Probably not (4)
  - Definitely not (5)
- Q18 Would you run for political office if you were approached to do so?
  - Definitely yes (1)
  - Probably yes (2)
  - Might or might not (3)
  - Probably not (4)
  - Definitely not (5)
- Q19 How likely would it be for you to run for political office in the future?
  - Extremely likely (1)
  - Moderately likely (2)
  - Slightly likely (3)
  - Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
  - Slightly unlikely (5)
  - Moderately unlikely (6)
  - Extremely unlikely (7)
- Demographics
  - Q20 What is your sex?
    - Male (1)
    - Female (2)
    - Other (3) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Q21 Please indicate your age.
    - Write-in
  - Q22 Please select your ethnicity.
    - White (1)
    - Black or African American (2)

- American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- Asian (4)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- Other (6)
- Q23 What is your classification?
  - Freshman (1)
  - Sophomore (2)
  - Junior (3)
  - Senior (4)
  - Graduate student (5)
- Q24 Please indicate your major or program of study.
  - Write-in
- Q25 Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else? (Randomized responses)
  - Republican (1)
  - Democrat (2)
  - Independent (3)
  - Other (4) \_\_\_\_\_
  - No preference (5)
- Q26 Please indicate your relationship status
  - Single (1)
  - In a long-term relationship (2)
  - Married (3)
  - Other: (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- Q27 Please indicate what region of the country you are from.
  - Northeast (1)
  - Midwest (2)
  - South (3)
  - West (4)

**Appendix B. OLS regression estimates for the effects of extracurricular activities on political ambition using male and female respondents**

	Competition	Leadership/Risk	Role Model	Overall
Level of competition	-0.086 (0.092)	-	-	-0.046 (0.089)
Competitive activities	0.189 (0.093*)	-	-	0.162 (0.093*)
Leadership role	-	0.288 (0.161)	-	0.119 (0.166)
Level of risk	-	-0.260 (0.061***)	-	-0.260 (0.061***)
Same sex coach/leader	-	-	-0.366 (0.141**)	-0.324 (0.137*)
Co-ed activity	-	-	0.280 (0.145)	0.176 (0.144)
Female	-0.536 (0.198**)	-0.477 (0.191*)	-0.637 (0.196***)	-0.578 (0.192**)
Activity length	0.098 (0.114)	0.100 (0.108)	0.191 (0.109*)	0.084 (0.111)
Start age	0.077 (0.063)	0.081 (0.061)	0.051 (0.063)	0.077 (0.061)
White	0.049 (0.204)	0.115 (0.200)	0.054 (0.202)	0.108 (0.198)
Academic classification	-0.173 (0.087*)	-0.159 (0.085*)	-0.174 (0.087*)	-0.175 (0.084*)
Republican	0.263 (0.170)	0.233 (0.165)	0.300 (0.168*)	0.237 (0.163)
Democrat	0.474 (0.179**)	0.559 (0.176**)	0.480 (0.177**)	0.541 (0.174**)
South	-0.722 (0.437*)	-0.780 (0.451*)	-0.807 (0.433*)	-0.816 (0.451*)
Age	-0.007 (0.037)	-0.019 (0.036)	-0.011 (0.037)	-0.014 (0.036)

\*\*\*p < .001

\*\* p < .01

\* p < .10

# Appendix C. IRB Approval Form



## ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST

**TO:** Ashley Staszak  
Political Science

**FROM:** Dennis Landin  
Chair, Institutional Review Board

**DATE:** October 1, 2019

**RE:** IRB# E11832

**TITLE:** Examining Political Ambition

Institutional Review Board  
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair  
130 David Boyd Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
P: 225.578.8692  
F: 225.578.5983  
[irb@lsu.edu](mailto:irb@lsu.edu)  
[lsu.edu/research](http://lsu.edu/research)

**New Protocol/Modification/Continuation:** New Protocol

**Review Date:** 9/26/2019

**Approved**     X                          **Disapproved** \_\_\_\_\_


**Approval Date:** 9/26/2019    **Approval Expiration Date:** 9/25/2022

**Exemption Category/Paragraph:** 2a

**Signed Consent Waived?:** Yes

**Re-review frequency:** (three years unless otherwise stated)

**LSU Proposal Number** (if applicable):

**By:** Dennis Landin, Chairman 

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –  
Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:**

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects\*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.**

\* All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>

## Works Cited

- Beyer, Sylvia, and Edward M. Bowden. "Gender Differences in Self-Perceptions: Convergent Evidence from Three Measures of Accuracy and Bias." 1997. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 23, no. 2: 157-72. doi:10.1177/0146167297232005.
- Buunk, Abraham P., José Maria Peiró, and Chris Griffioen. 2007. "A Positive Role Model May Stimulate Career-Oriented Behavior." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 37 (7): 1489–1500. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2007.00223>.
- Byrnes, James P., David C. Miller, and William D. Shafer. "Gender Differences in Risk Taking: A Meta-Analysis." 1999. *Psychological Bulletin* 125: 367–383.
- Carter, Mary Ellen, Francesca Franco, and Mireia Gine. "Executive Gender Pay Gaps: The Roles of Board Diversity and Female Risk Aversion." 2014. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. doi:10.2139/ssrn.2503883.
- "Center for American Women and Politics." *Center for American Women and Politics*, Rutgers University: Eagleton Institute of Politics, 29 Nov. 2018, [http://cawp.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/resources/results\\_release\\_5bletterhead5d\\_1.pdf](http://cawp.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/resources/results_release_5bletterhead5d_1.pdf).
- Crowder-Meyer, Melody. "Baker, Bus Driver, Babysitter, Candidate? Revealing the Gendered Development of Political Ambition Among Ordinary Americans." 2018. *Political Behavior*. doi:10.1007/s11109-018-9498-9.
- Dasgupta, N., & Asgari, S. Seeing is believing: Exposure to counterstereotypic women leaders and its effect on the malleability of automatic gender stereotyping. 2004. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 40, 642–658. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2004.02.003
- Dasgupta, Nilanjana. "Ingroup Experts and Peers as Social Vaccines Who Inoculate the Self-Concept: The Stereotype Inoculation Model." 2011. *Psychological Inquiry* 22 (4): 231–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2011.607313>.
- Diekman, Amanda B., and Monica C. Schneider. "A Social Role Theory Perspective on Gender Gaps in Political Attitudes." 2010. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 34 (4): 486–97
- Diekman, Amanda B., Mia Steinberg, Elizabeth R. Brown, Aimee L. Belanger, and Emily K. Clark. "A Goal Congruity Model of Role Entry, Engagement, and Exit: Understanding Communal Goal Processes in STEM Gender Gaps." 2017. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 21 (2): 142–75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868316642141>
- Eccles, Jacquelynne S. "The Development of Children Ages 6 to 14." 1999. *The Future of Children* 9, no. 2: 30. doi:10.2307/1602703.
- Fox, Richard L. "Congressional Elections Women's Candidacies and the Road to Gender Parity." 2010. *Gender and Elections*, 198-219. doi:10.1017/9781108277792.008.

- Fox, Richard L., and Jennifer L. Lawless. "Entering the Arena? Gender and the Decision to Run for Office." 2004. *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 2: 264. doi:10.2307/1519882.
- Fox, Richard L., and Jennifer L. Lawless. "To Run or Not to Run for Office: Explaining Nascent Political Ambition." 2005. *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 3: 642. doi:10.2307/3647737.
- Fox, Richard, and Jennifer Lawless. "Why Are Women Still Not Running for Public Office?" 2008. *Issues in Governance Studies*, vol. 16
- Fox, Richard L., and Jennifer L. Lawless. "If Only They'd Ask: Gender, Recruitment, and Political Ambition." 2010. *The Journal of Politics* 72, no. 2: 310-26. doi:10.1017/s0022381609990752.
- Fox, Richard L., and Jennifer L. Lawless. "Gendered Perceptions and Political Candidacies: A Central Barrier to Women's Equality in Electoral Politics." 2010. *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 1: 59-73. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00484.x.
- Fox, Richard L., and Jennifer L. Lawless. "Reconciling Family Roles with Political Ambition: The New Normal for Women in Twenty-First Century U.S. Politics." 2014. *The Journal of Politics* 76, no. 2: 398-414. doi:10.1017/s0022381613001473.
- Fulton, Sarah A., Cherie D. Maestas, L. Sandy Maisel, and Walter J. Stone. "The Sense of a Woman: Gender, Ambition, and the Decision to Run for Congress." 2006. *Political Research Quarterly* 59, no. 2: 235-48. doi:10.1177/106591290605900206.
- Greenlee, Jill S., Mirya R. Holman, and Rachel VanSickle-Ward. "Making It Personal: Assessing the Impact of In-Class Exercises on Closing the Gender Gap in Political Ambition." 2014. *Journal of Political Science Education* 10 (1): 48-61.
- Healy, Andrew, and Neil Malhotra. "Childhood Socialization and Political Attitudes: Evidence from a Natural Experiment." 2013. *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 75, no. 4, pp. 1023-1037., doi:10.1017/s0022381613000996.
- Herrmann, Sarah D., Robert Mark Adelman, Jessica E. Bodford, Oliver Graudejus, Morris A. Okun, and Virginia S. Y. Kwan. "The Effects of a Female Role Model on Academic Performance and Persistence of Women in STEM Courses." 2016. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 38 (5): 258-68.
- Jacobs, J. E., & Eccles, J. S. "The impact of mothers' gender- role stereotypic beliefs on mothers' and children's ability perceptions." 1992. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63, 932-944.



- Jenkins, Shannon. "A Woman's Work Is Never Done? Fund-Raising Perception and Effort among Female State Legislative Candidates." 2007. *Political Research Quarterly* 60, no. 2: 230-39. doi:10.1177/1065912907301682.
- Kennedy Root, A., & Denham, S. A. "The role of gender in the socialization of emotion: Key concepts and critical issues. In A. Kennedy Root & S. Denham (Eds.), *The role of gender in the socialization of emotion: Key concepts and critical issues.*" 2010. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 128, 1–9. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kling, Kristen C., Janet Hyde, Carolin Showers, and Brenda N. Buswell. "Gender Differences in Self-Esteem: A Meta-Analysis." 1999. *Psychological Bulletin* 125(4): 470–500.
- Ladam, Christina, Jeffrey J. Harden, and Jason H. Windett. "Prominent Role Models: High-Profile Female Politicians and the Emergence of Women as Candidates for Public Office." 2018. *American Journal of Political Science* 62, no. 2: 369-81. doi:10.1111/ajps.12351.
- Leaper, C., & Farkas, T. "The socialization of gender during childhood and adolescence. In J. E. Grusec & P. D. Hastings (Eds.), *Handbook of socialization: Theory and research.*" 2015. 2nd ed., pp. 541–565. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Maestas, Cherie D., Sarah Fulton, L. Sandy Maisel, and Walter J. Stone. "When to Risk It? Institutions, Ambitions, the Decision to Run for the U.S. House." 2006. *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 2: 195-208. doi:10.1017/s0003055406062101.
- Mahoney, John. "Legislatures at a Glance." 2019. NCSL: National Conference of State Legislatures. <http://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/legislatures-at-a-glance.aspx>.
- Mariani, Mack, Bryan W. Marshall, and A. Lanethea Mathews-Schultz. "See Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, and Sarah Palin Run? Party, Ideology, and the Influence of Female Role Models on Young Women." 2015. *Political Research Quarterly* 68, no. 4: 716-31. doi:10.1177/1065912915605904.
- Maxfield, Sylvia, Mary Shapiro, Vipin Gupta, and Susan Hass. "Gender and Risk: Women, Risk Taking and Risk Aversion." 2010. *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 25, no. 7: 586-604. doi:10.1108/17542411011081383.
- Mayhew, David. *Congress: The Electoral Connection* 2004. 2 ed. Yale University Press. p. x.
- Morrongiello, B. A., & Hogg, K. "Mothers' reactions to children misbehaving in ways that can lead to injury: Implications for gender differences in children's risk taking and injuries." 2004. *Sex Roles*, 50, 103–118.

- Nixon, Lucia A., and Michael D. Robinson. "The Educational Attainment of Young Women: Role Model Effects of Female High School Faculty." 1999. *Demography* 36(2): 185–94.
- Oxley, Zoe M. "GENDER AND THE SOCIALIZATION OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION." 2017. *The Political Psychology of Women in U.S. Politics*, Routledge, pp. 15–33.
- Pajares, Frank. "Gender and Perceived Self-Efficacy in Self-Regulated Learning." 2002. *Theory Into Practice* 41, no. 2: 116-25. doi:10.1207/s15430421tip4102\_8.
- Preece, Jessica, and Olga Stoddard. "Why Women Don't Run: Experimental Evidence on Gender Differences in Political Competition Aversion." 2015. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, vol. 117: pp. 296–308. doi:10.1016/j.jebo.2015.04.019
- Raty, H., Vanska, J., Kasanen, K., & Karkkainen, R. "Parents' explanation of their child's performance in mathematics and reading: A replication and extension of Yee and Eccles." 2002. *Sex Roles*, 46, 121–128. doi: 10.1023/A:1016573627828
- Rhodes, Nancy, and Kelly Pivik. "Age and Gender Differences in Risky Driving: The Roles of Positive Affect and Risk Perception." 2011. *Accident Analysis & Prevention* 43, no. 3: 923-31. doi:10.1016/j.aap.2010.11.015.
- Stout, Jane G., Nilanjana Dasgupta, Matthew Hunsinger, and Melissa A. McManus. "STEMing the Tide: Using Ingroup Experts to Inoculate Women's Self-Concept in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)." 2011. *Journal of Personality*.
- Sweet-Cushman, Jennie. "Gender, Risk Assessment, and Political Ambition." 2016. *Politics and the Life Sciences* vol. 35, no. 02: pp. 1–17., doi:10.1017/pls.2016.13.
- "Women in State Legislatures, 2018." 2018. Center for American Women in Politics (CAWP). <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/women-state-legislature-2018>
- "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: UNITED STATES." 2019. Census Bureau QuickFacts. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/LFE046217>.
- Yee, D. K., & Eccles, J. S. "Parent perceptions and attributions for children's math achievement." 1988. *Sex Roles*, 19, 317–333. doi: 10.1007/BF00289840

## **VITA**

Ashley Staszak, born in Mount Olive, New Jersey received her undergraduate degree in mass communication from Louisiana State University. Following her graduation, she entered the Department of Political Science at Louisiana State University to earn her master's degree. Upon completion of her master's degree, she will begin work on political campaigns and in candidate training.