

Daring to Compete: Political Ambition and Gender in the Wake of Title IX

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Elizabeth Ann Sharrow
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<u>Sally J. Kenney, Professor</u>	<u>11/30/09</u>
Name and Title of Paper Supervisor	Date of oral presentation
Signature of Paper Supervisor, certifying successful completion of oral presentation	

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Name and Title of Paper Supervisor	Date
Signature of Paper Supervisor, certifying successful completion of oral presentation	

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Name and Title of Paper Supervisor	Date
Signature of Second Committee Member, certifying successful completion of oral presentation	

Introduction

In 1999, then-First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton paid a visit to a high school in Chelsea, New York. The occasion was the screening of an HBO documentary about the role of women in sports. Sofia Tutti, the captain of the girl's basketball team, introduced Mrs. Clinton to the assembled crowd. Amid speculation surrounding Mrs. Clinton's possible run for the Senate, and while shaking the First Lady's hand, Tutti whispered: "Dare to compete, Mrs. Clinton. Dare to compete." In her memoir, Clinton reflects upon this moment:

Her comment caught me off guard, so much so that I left the event and began to think: Could I be afraid to do something I had urged countless other women to do? Why am I vacillating about taking on this race? Why aren't I thinking more seriously about it? Maybe I should 'dare to compete' (Clinton 2003, 501).

Clinton not only entered the Senatorial race—she won. As this paper will demonstrate, Clinton reveals under-theorized concepts for the study of political ambition: candidate desire and willingness to compete. Her story, though not specifically about Clinton's sports participation, illustrates the close affiliation shared by public arenas of politics and public arenas of sports. Competitive desire, key to success in each arena, is under-addressed in the political ambition literature. This paper will delineate a research design that addresses this gap.

During her address to the 2001 Yale University graduating class, Senator Clinton reflected again on Tutti's encouragement: "I took that to heart because it is hard to compete sometimes, especially in public ways, when your failures are there for everyone to see and you don't know what is going to happen from one day to the next. And yet so

much of life, whether we like to accept it or not, is competing with ourselves to be the best we can be." Tutti's encouragement became a mantra during Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign for the Democratic endorsement. Further, it highlights the central topic of this paper: that politics, like sports, is about competition. Sports, like politics, are deeply gendered. In order to understand the dynamics forces affecting women as political candidates, I assert that we must consider the dynamics driving change in access to sports. Clinton's comments highlight that while not all competitors are politicians, all politicians must be competitors. Although not all competitors are athletes, playing sports teaches competition. The proliferation in opportunities for women over the past thirty-five years, has defined the dynamics in competitive sports. I posit that this change in access to athletics is meaningful for women as potential politicians. Clinton's reflections highlight the need to explore the conditions mediating gender, competition, and political ambition. This paper addresses that need.

Concepts and Literature

I begin by assessing and organizing the concepts and literature on political ambition. Research on the topic addresses one primary question: why do citizens run for political office? Scholars focus on identifying inputs to this question on two levels. Some researchers address the personal decisions and experiences of individual, potential candidates (Kazee 1994, Fowler and McClure 1989). Others analyze the socio-political conditions that encourage or constrain individuals in their decision to seek political office (Lawless and Fox 2005). This paper will address the latter. I argue that the current literature on ambition lacks an understanding of candidates as inherently competitive actors. Instead of discussing competition, the literature addresses strategy and viability of

candidates at the time of their first candidacy (Kazee 1994). This focus on individual concerns divorces the study of ambition from its social context. Political campaigns are social and political events and it is therefore necessary to consider candidate decisions to participate in them in a social and political context. I suggest that scholars can conceptually strengthen their understanding of the decision to run for political office as illustrative of a candidate's willingness to engage in competition and that this specific decision is embedded in a dynamic social context. Thus, my second contribution to this literature focuses on analyzing the changing context of socialized competition in the wake of Title IX. Since the passage of Title IX, the anti-sex discrimination law of 1972, women's participation in higher education, postgraduate education, and organized athletics exhibits exponential growth (Suggs 2006). Increased women's participation in competitive educational and athletic opportunities has transformed the ways in which subsequent generations of women "dare to compete".

Importantly, Title IX transformed the socialized competition. Conceptually, I therefore refer to Title IX as a policy event whose implementation has measurable individual and societal outcomes. The enforcement of this law is generative of gendered changes to sport participation, observable in the proliferation of women's athletic programs at youth, adolescent, high school, and collegiate levels (US Department of Education 1997). The effects of this policy can be seen in two main outcomes relevant to my point. First, these effects manifest in the expanded numbers of women seeking opportunities in higher education and athletics since 1972 (Suggs 2006). For the purposes of this paper, I will use the terms "athletics" and "sports" interchangeably in reference to competitive athletic teams at all levels. I argue that increased numbers of

women active in higher education and athletics is the result of the way these two institutions socialize practices of competition and leadership. Second, I argue that increased cultural acceptance of women as competitive athletes and leaders represent one significant outcome of Title IX. Learned competition and learned leadership are not perfectly synonymous practices, but my paper will address both outcomes. My initial analysis will use leadership experiences as a proxy for competitive experiences in the candidate-level data currently available. In the absence of the data my research design suggests should be collected, measures of pre-candidacy leadership reflect one theorized outcome of Title IX. Conceptually, I hypothesize that a willingness to engage in leadership positions is reflective of a willingness to engage in potential competition. Competition in the political sense is analogous to competition in the athletic sense because both require individuals to engage in contests where their personal success or failure is unknown. Political candidates and athletes know merely that the contest will be decided with one winner and one (or more) losers. A willingness to embrace these unknown outcomes reveals a candidates willingness to compete. I suggest that the sporting context is important for the study of politics because the policy effect of Title IX dramatically changed women as potential athletes, and therefore women as potential candidates as well.

I do not suggest that all athletes will necessarily consider a political career. Nor do I suggest that all politicians were necessarily once athletes. Instead, I suggest that one significant characteristic which differentiates non-candidates from candidates is a desire to engage in political competition. Without this desire, and a belief in their ability to engage in competition, citizens are unlikely to become politicians. Thus, a deeper

understanding of socialization of gendered competition is critical for an understanding of political ambition. In particular, I argue that the gender and political ambition literature will benefit from an understanding of how Title IX has changed the conditions and scope under which sports and education taught women about competition. I do not suggest that all women politicians must once have been athletes. Instead, I suggest that the policy context under which women gain access to educational and athletic opportunities changes the conditions under which they choose whether or not to become politicians. If we want to understand the dynamic gendered dimensions of political ambition, we must consider the effects of Title IX.

In this paper, I perform a critical literature review, an extended research design, and some initial data analysis. My primary contribution to political science scholarship is conceptual. My theoretical expectation is that the policy consequences of Title IX are visible not only in the numbers of women engaging in competitive athletics, but also in the way these women seek competitive opportunities. Despite the fact that not all athletes are destined to pursue political careers, I suspect that the dissolution of gendered barriers to entry into organized sports trends with an increasing number of women candidates. As Hillary Clinton's story implies, comfort with competition evolves through reiteration of competitive experiences. Political and sporting actors who engage in multiple games, matches, or political races gain comfort with competition as a routine experience. Thus, I suspect that the effects of competitive socialization as an input to political ambition are cumulative and therefore most visible in younger cohorts of women candidates. In short, sports acts as a socialization mechanism for competition because participants train to compete in multiple games, races or contests over the course of a

season. Competition, in sports, becomes a regular event, demonstrating to athletes that competitions ending in losses are educational events rather than permanent set-backs. Losses, through sports, become less devastating to competitors when understood as temporary measures of their prowess, rather than permanent judgments on their character. Competitive behaviors in or out of the sporting context, are learned behaviors. As Clinton's words suggest, individuals gain comfort with competition through consistent practice. I suggest that those who have spent most of their youth and young adulthood in a post-Title IX world are most likely to exhibit profound effects of competitive socialization. The research design proposed in this paper delineates how I wish to empirically investigate this hypothesis. Next, I review the literature on political ambition, primarily as it pertains to women's campaigns. Doing so places my research in conversation with feminist scholars investigating the conditions affecting women's under-representation in elected office. Ultimately, this paper aligns with the normative dimension of the gender scholarship, providing evidence for the inclination that if feminists can harness the power of women's athletics they have the potential to increase women's political power.

Gender and Ambition

The work on gender and political ambition problematizes the suggestion that all potential candidates face the same constraints and incentives when making their decision. At all levels of government, women remain proportionally under-represented when compared to the percentage of women in the electorate. As of October 2009, women hold less than seventeen percent of the seats in the U.S. Congress, twenty-two percent of statewide elective executive office positions, and twenty-four percent of state legislative

positions (CAWP 2009). These numbers are relevant to a study of political ambition because the ambition literature addresses a main disjuncture in the gender and elections literature. Though it is recently well substantiated that “when women run, women win” at all stages of electoral winnowing and across types of political office, women remain under-represented as a portion of the electorate (Setzler et al 1997, Pearson and Lawless 2009). The ambition literature asserts that the reason for this descriptive outcome is found in a pre-electoral stage. Work in progress at the Center on Women and Public Policy at the University of Minnesota confirms these findings of gender neutral election results for the past ten years of Minnesota State Legislature elections (Kenney, Pearson, Fitzpatrick and Sharrow 2009). Analysis of the Minnesota Legislative Candidate Data Base (Appendix A) confirms that although women in the Minnesota legislature exhibit the same under-representation as a portion of total seats, their electoral success rates are not systematically skewed when compared to their male counterparts. At each stage in the electoral process of elections in Minnesota from 1997 to 2008, Kenney et al. find either gender neutral outcomes, or those indicating a slight advantage for women. Neither party endorsements, nor primaries, nor general elections systematically favor men over women candidates. This particular finding is relevant to my final analysis.

The gender and elections scholarship dismisses a plethora of other causes for women’s under-representation. Scholars find mixed evidence for sex-stereotyping that disfavors women candidates by the electorate. Evidence that only under specific conditions do voters evaluate women more harshly than men (Lawless 2004, Sanbonmatsu 2002a, Fox 1997, Kahn 1996) displaces evidence of overt bias against women as candidates (Githens and Prestage 1977; Kirkpatrick 1974; Witt, Paget and

Matthews 1994) . Simultaneously, the gender and election literature delineates many concerns that potential candidates must confront when embarking on a campaign. Potential candidates are much more successful when they behave strategically, running when the access, competition, resources, structures and personal contexts are favorable (Kazee 1994, 167). Pearson and McGhee (2004) conclude that in Congressional races, women must be better candidates than men to win at the same rates. Thus, scholars reach mixed conclusions on differential effects for men versus women candidates. Collectively, the literature concludes that women candidates may potentially face competitive, acrimonious, and biased treatment when running for office. Entering political campaigns under such conditions requires candidates to embrace the unknown. This implies that candidates (women in particular) enter races with one certainty: they will likely compete with another candidate to secure favor amongst voters. The outcomes and gendered constraints may vary, but competition remains a constant.

The aforementioned scholarship investigates the conditions women face while running for office. Other scholars question the gendered nature of how and when candidates decide to run. This work is conceptually situated in the notion of “political ambition”. This concept refers to the underlying set of personal attributes and motivating factors that drive citizens out of the potential candidate pool and into a campaign (Kazee 1994). The literature on gender and elections relies on the assumption that women will respond to political opportunities in the same way as men. Lawless and Fox’s study on the pre-candidacy stage of political ambition challenges that assumption (2005). They survey men and women in the potential candidate pool, deriving three important findings. Women are less likely to run, consider running, or express interest in running for political

office than are men, holding professional credentials and personal characteristics constant (146). Further, they find that women are most likely to consider running when others suggest it. This finding is echoed in Clinton's memoirs and it highlights an important aspect of political ambition. Political ambition is part personal decision to engage in competition, and part social conditions of support and encouragement to help individuals believe themselves capable.

Anecdotal Examples

Clinton's example is not the only one suggestive of links between competitive predispositions and political candidates. Media accounts of other very successful male politicians explicitly draw the connection. A 2007 *New York Times* article reflects on Barack Obama's lifelong enjoyment of basketball (Kantor 2007). This excerpt promotes an analysis showing the nexus between politics and sports:

From John F. Kennedy's sailing to Bill Clinton's golf mulligans to John Kerry's windsurfing, sports has been used, correctly or incorrectly, as a personality decoder for presidents and presidential aspirants. So, armchair psychologists and fans of athletic metaphors, take note: Barack Obama is a wily player of pickup basketball, the version of the game with unspoken rules, no referee and lots of elbows. He has been playing since adolescence, on cracked-asphalt playgrounds and at exclusive health clubs, developing a quick offensive style, a left-handed jump shot and relationships that have extended into the political arena (Kantor 6/1/07).

The journalist suggests a link between political prowess and competition. Further, she implies a parallel between the un-refereed nature of pickup basketball with that of competitive politics. Participants in both must be prepared to stomach some unexpected elbows in a game without rules.

In this case, as in my next example, the politicians are well-established and successful, distinguishing them from candidates at the dawn of their political careers. In both cases, the politicians draw parallels from their competitive edge on the court to that in their personal development. Thus, I offer sports in these stories as a metaphor for politics. Former Minnesota Senator Norm Coleman spoke directly about the role basketball played in his development as a high school student and competitor on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered":

Winning was important, doing those things to getting it done so you could stay on the court was kind of a way of operating. I know Chuck Schumer [Senator-NY(D) and fellow alum of James Madison High School in Brooklyn, NY] was on that court and I was on that court and just a lot of people. You had to work hard to reach the top. Nothing was given to you and I think we grew up in families and environment in which public service and public involvement, debate and discourse, was a part of your way of life, it was an honor thing, in addition to competitive athletics (NPR, 11/10/6).

Senator Coleman's remarks reveal two relevant points. First, learned competition and success through hard work in athletics hold a "natural" place in the masculinized development of young men of his generation (a claim further analyzed by sport sociologist Messner 1992). Second, athletics was not only a part of Coleman's adolescent development, but a part of his political development as well. Experiences in athletic goal setting, team interaction, winning and losing play a role in the competitive development of many men of the Senators' generations. The expression of such experiences in light of his political career, illuminate a narrative relating Coleman's public service career to competition in sports. Perhaps Coleman, Schumer, and now

Bernard Sanders (Senator from Vermont, and fellow alum of James Madison High) were not planning their Senate campaigns while they lofted jump shots off the high school bench. However, it is just as sure that their female counterparts at James Madison were not planning their campaigns either. In the pre-Title IX era (both are late 1960s grads), the girls likely did not have a team.¹

These narratives demonstrate something quite similar to that which Hillary Clinton described. They reveal that competition in sports and in politics are not only similar, but closely related. Further, the experiences of the two then-Senators suggest that for pre-Title IX generations, men learned competition in sporting endeavors unavailable to women of the same age. Title IX dramatically changed these conditions. Additional recent media indicates that while this long-standing social right-to-sport for adolescent males endures, the doors have opened for women to hone their competitive skills on the playing fields. The book *Madam President: Shattering the Last Glass Ceiling* (2000) offers testimonial by women in government suggestive of transformative outcomes of Title IX:

Former labor secretary Lynn Martin says the importance of this law (Title IX) should not be underestimated. “The girls are now playing competitive sports, and that has a whole different effect. I’m not talking about sports as a career. I’m talking about learning to win and lose, to work together as a team.”

New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman, whose tomboy childhood conditioned her for the rough and tumble of politics, echoes the praise for Title IX. Her daughter Kate played varsity ice hockey and lacrosse at Wesleyan. “You can see a difference in her,” says Whitman. “You see a lot of women coming out as leaders in sport, and sport teaches you a lot. It’s good to see.” (Clift 2000, 22)

¹ James Madison hosts a long list of distinguished alumni, including Nobel Prize winners, famous musicians, authors, politicians and sports stars. While the long list contains noticeably fewer women, Ruth Bader Ginsburg is a notable alum, as well as Claire Shulman Kantoff, the President of the Queens Borough from 1986-2002. Senator-elect Sanders boasts a basketball, baseball, and track (elected captain of the team) career at James Madison.

Women members of the U.S. House of Representatives agree. Since 2002, Congresswomen have initiated several House Resolution (“HRes”) bills in support of recognizing the importance of sport in fostering leadership ability and success in women. “HRes” bills are non-binding resolutions of the House that do not carry the force of law. Members of Congress use these bills to express shared sentiments of groups of representatives on the Floor and in therefore in the Congressional Record. An example, from the 108th Congress, 1st Session, HRes 53 reads as follows:

Recognizing the importance of sports in fostering the leadership ability and success of women

Whereas the leadership skills taught by participating in sports benefit women throughout their lives, given them the tools to teach, to effect change, and to inspire their families, friends, and colleagues;

Whereas more than 4 out of 5 executive businesswomen played sports as children, and the vast majority of those businesswomen say the lessons they learned through athletics, such as discipline, team-building, competitiveness, and risk-taking have contributed to their success in business;

Whereas research indicates that girls who participate in sports are more likely to experience academic success and graduate from high school than those who do not participate; and

Resolved, That the House of Representatives recognizes the role of women's sports programs in the development of women's leadership skills and supports the goals of `Women's Leadership Through Sports Day'.

These examples demonstrate a sentiment among women politicians that changing sports socialization dynamics have effects on women’s leadership and competition.

Only one scholarly text addresses the presence of former professional athletes in public office. David T. Canon’s book *Actors, Athletes, and Astronauts* (1990) focuses on traditional barriers associated with amateurism in political contests. These barriers include a lack of name-recognition, undeveloped public trust that most candidates must

overcome in order to be considered viable. Celebrity politicians, some of whom were professional male athletes, do not face the same constraints. Though this work demonstrates the difference between celebrity candidates and candidates in general, Canon's work only addresses male politicians. Not only are all of the figures he discusses men, the categories he identifies as productive of successful amateur candidates are available almost exclusively to men. Few professional sports leagues sponsor female athletes. Men dominate high-profile, professional athletic coaching. Until recently, NASA recruited only male astronauts, and the ban on women in combat makes P.O.W.s and other war heroes by in large, men. Canon's work can explain the successful candidacies of Bill Bradley or John Glenn, but predicts little for a generation of emerging, non-professional, female athletes. Scholars of political ambition and gender have not asked questions regarding athletic opportunity or learned competitive experiences that could confirm the cultural changes that politicians Martin and Whitman express. In order to investigate both my conceptual expectations and the anecdotal evidence, I propose the following research design.

Research Design

My theoretical expectations regarding the direct effects of Title IX enforcement on competitive socialization are empirically testable. I therefore propose a survey of current legislators in the Minnesota State Legislature to investigate their pre-electoral competitive experiences. I expect to see variation in youth-based competitive experiences between different age cohorts of representatives. I expect this variation to align with competitive experiences made available by Title IX. This variation should be most profound between cohorts of women legislators, with male legislators within each

cohort operating as the experimental control group. The Minnesota legislature is a particularly good site for cohort analysis because of the relatively large number of women legislators and their varied ages.²

I specify the timing of the treatment effect as the year 1980. Institutional compliance lagged behind the law's passage as the executive branch spent year ironing out the enforcement expectations. By 1979, the Office of Civil Rights announced the final executive interpretation, making clear to institutions the implementation requirements. I choose the year 1980 as a reasonable year to expect the first "treatment effects" because it was the first year institutions OCR held institutions accountable for their athletic policies (Suggs 2006). This treatment allowed for women in different age cohorts access to competitive athletic opportunities. This study would seek to investigate the differential effects of opportunity for competition on different groups of women legislators.

For the purposes of the design, the nonequivalent no-treatment control group is the cohort of male legislators. We know that before and after 1980, American men had access to athletic competitive teams. I choose an interrupted time series with a nonequivalent no-treatment control group not only because it seems to fit the available sample of legislators, but also because we expect that men received no specific treatment in the post-Title IX context. This untreated control group allows us to test for threats of internal validity that operate within the time series (Cook and Campbell 1979). I choose to also survey male legislators because I expect it will establish a pre-treatment disparity

² The 2008-2009 membership of the Minnesota State Legislature demonstrates significant variation across sex, educational status, occupation, age, and party. Specific demographic information available for the MN Senate at: http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/members/member_demographics.php?ls=85#header and for the MN House at: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/members/hmem.asp>.

in available competitive opportunities between older cohorts of legislators. Although we do not know whether, as a group, male legislators are more or less likely than men generally to play sports, I assume that propensity for legislators to be competitors will not vary between the male and female legislators in this sample. I expect to observe differences in competitive experiences between men and women legislators. The proliferation of teams for women only after 1980 give us reason to believe that variation will exist between all groups of women and men legislators, and also between different cohorts of women (U.S. Department of Education 1997). The table below indicates my expectations regarding the quasi-experimental treatment of proposed groups of women:

Table 1: Interrupted Time-Series Groups

			Obs 1	Obs 2	Obs 3	Obs 4 X	Obs 5	Obs 6	Obs 7	Obs 8	
			Year	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Gender	Age	Age in 1980									
Men	Entire Range	Varies		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Women	Oldest in Leg (~69)	40		O	O	O	X	O	O	O	O
Women	Average (~49)	20		O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X
Women	Average (~39)	10			O	O	X	X	X	X	X
Women	Youngest in Leg (~29)	1					X	X	X	X	X

As this table indicates, I propose analysis of four groups of women.³ I expect different enforcement effects for different groups of women based on their age in 1980. Women who were younger in 1980 had opportunity to experience the effects of Title IX in a different way than did those who had already aged out of youth sport opportunities. This table establishes my expectations that older women (who were approximately 40 years old in 1980) experienced the treatment of Title IX policy changes in 1980, but were

³ This breakdown of groups may be a bit unreasonable considering the sample size in the Minnesota legislature. However, I propose this breakdown in order to explicate how the research design and expected treatment could be applied to larger groups.

unlikely to experience policy effects that changed their relationship to competitive sports.

Younger cohorts of women (those who were twenty years or younger in 1980)

experienced the policy effects of Title IX directly. I propose that they received the

treatment and continued effects through their adolescence and young adulthood.

Proposed Survey

The questions included in my proposed survey would ask all legislators about their competitive experiences before entering politics. As Table 2 delineates, I define these competitive experiences broadly. I suspect both athletic related competitive backgrounds and non-athletic experiences (including things like high school mock trial or forensic competitions) act to socialize competitive experiences. I expect to find variation on the following:

Table 2: Proposed Survey Variables

Independent/Explanatory Variables			
Sports Involvement	Non-Sport Competition	Historicizing Competition	Demographic Variables
Youth Sports (Age 4-10)	Youth (Age 4-10)	Current Age	Sex
Adolescent Sports (Age 10-15)	Adolescence (Age 10-15)	Age during passage of Title IX	Hometown
High School Sports (Age 15-18)	High School (Age 15-18)	Age of first political race	High School Graduation
College Sports (Age 18-22)	College (Age 18-22)		College Graduation
Elite Sports	Elite Level Competition		Advanced Degree
Professional Sports	Scholarship Awarded?		
		Family Support	
Type of Sports Played	Type of Competition	Parental support of sporting decisions	
Type of Sports Available	Music	Transportation availability	
College Scholarship Awarded?	Art		
	Debate/Speech/Forensics		
	Theater Competition		
	Student Government		

I derive my non-sport related list of competitive experiences from the Minnesota State High School League list of competitive activities. I will ask respondents will to comment on their informal sporting activities before high school, as well as any formal or informal college competitive experiences.⁴ I will also ask about their familial support they received in pursuit of competitive opportunities. This survey allows for a stringent empirical investigation of the anecdotal connections between political ambition, competition, and sports.

Preliminary Data on the Minnesota Legislature

In order to proceed with this research, I would need to develop a relatively large-N sample of MN State Legislators from which to survey. I must create a survey instrument to measure the variables listed. Interview questions regarding more thorough investigations of competitive experiences must be developed in order to substantiate my investigation. Such research is beyond my means at this time. Even without the full quasi-experimental analysis I have proposed here, analysis of the 2006 candidate cohort for the Minnesota State Legislature provides some evidence that demonstrates gendered experiences with leadership in candidates for the state legislature. The 2006 Minnesota State Legislative Candidate Survey asks candidates about their pre-electoral experiences

⁴ The survey should begin by establishing the sporting backgrounds of the sample pool: Were youth, adolescent, high school, or collegiate sports a part of their development? How long did they remain involved in sports? Which sports did they play? How often did they compete in their sport? Did they participate in co-ed teams? How should we evaluate their participation in sex-segregated teams? What were their experiences with winning? What were their experiences with losing? How did those experiences shape their desire or confidence to engage in other non-sporting competitions? Were they competitive in other activities during their youth (i.e. Debate or speech teams, music competitions, art competitions, writing competitions, knowledge bowl, etc.)

as leaders in a variety of organizations.⁵ Although leadership roles in local organizations are not a direct corollary to competitive sporting opportunities, they do reveal a gendered dimension to legislative candidate experiences in community leadership. Further, as I suggest in my theoretical expectations, I believe that the propensity to seek leadership positions trend with strategic political actors. Further, I suggest that leadership training is a less perfect measure of Title IX enforcement as it pertains to educational access.

Though socialization in competition is not the same as socialization in leadership, I argue that there is reason to suspect that the implementation of Title IX socialized women in both. With increased access to either education or sports comes increased confidence as a leader or an athlete. It remains an empirical question as to whether variation in either condition can be found across women of different cohorts. I analyze leadership positions of candidates in the 2006 cohort as a less perfect, but readily available, indicator of pre-electoral ambitious behavior. I highlight these findings because they demonstrate a gendered variation in leadership experiences amongst legislative candidates. Though experiences acting as a leader in community organizations are not necessarily the outgrowth of a competitive sporting career, the gendered differences revealed by the survey data suggest the need for asking more detailed questions on adolescent leadership and competitive socialization to understand the factors leading to the gendered variation in pre-electoral experience. Since both the male and female winners of these elections will serve in the legislator sample I suggest can be used for my larger research design, it is important to establish that some gendered patterns of variation exist in their pre-electoral experience. I argue that a turn to the analysis of their leadership experience

⁵ Specifically, candidates were asked about their involvement and leadership roles in labor unions, business groups, educational groups (such as the PTA), non-profit or public interest campaigns or organizations, faith-based organizations, community or neighborhood groups, and women's organizations.

before campaigns does just that. In order to delineate these gendered variations, I turn to the survey data analysis.

Within the 2006 candidate cohort, fifty-five percent of respondents indicated pre-candidate leadership experiences in one of the seven types of organizations groups (N=242). Bivariate analysis of the relationship between gender and community leadership roles is significant ($p < 0.05$). Sixty-five percent of women candidates in the sample have held leadership roles, while only fifty-one percent of men have held the same. At the bivariate level, women candidates for office in 2006 were more active in leadership roles in the community than were men. When we look at the specific types of groups more closely, other intriguing gendered patterns emerge. Thirty-four percent of our sample were leaders in a women's organization, an education organization (like the PTA), a neighborhood organization, or a non-profit. In bivariate analysis, the relationship between gender and leadership of these types of organizations is also highly significant ($p < 0.001$). Fifty-six percent of women candidates report leadership positions in one of these types of organizations, while only twenty-seven percent of men did. Interestingly, this gender difference is not an effect of the inclusion of women's organizations in the subset of leadership roles. When I analyze candidate leadership experience in education, neighborhood, and non-profit groups, the statistical significance persists ($p < 0.001$). Thirty-five percent of our sample was a leader in one of these types of groups, but the significant relationship between gender and leadership reveals that fifty-four percent of women lead, compared to only twenty-six percent of men. In short, at the bivariate level, women candidates for the legislature were much more likely to have held leadership positions in the community (particularly in education,

neighborhood, non-profits, and women's organizations) than were men. The relationship between gender and leadership in business organizations, labor unions, and faith-based groups is not statistically significant, implying no gendered patterns exist between leadership in these organizations. Men and women are equally likely to lead in business, labor or faith-based groups.

The finding that women are more likely than men to hold leadership positions in education groups, neighborhood organizations, non-profits and women's organizations withstands statistical controls. In order to assess the robustness of this relationship, I use logistical regression analysis. The dependent variable is the dummy variable for leadership position in education, neighborhood organizations, non-profits, or women's organizations. I choose to control for independent factors that may have an effect on the ability of candidates to engage in community leadership before they run for office including: education level, number of children, age in 2006, previous electoral experience, previous appointed office experience, and political party. In each rendition of the model, including the final output reported in Table 3, the most significant predictor of leadership in the key community organizations was gender. None of the other independent variables exhibited any effect different than zero effect on the dependent variable. The effect of gender (defined as a dummy variable where women candidates =1) was both positive and significant. Table 3 presents the output in the form of odds ratios, allowing for easier interpretation.

Table 3: Predicting Gender and Leadership		
Variable	Odds Ratio	P-value
Female	3.87 (1.49)	0.000
Democrat	1.21 (0.52)	0.656
Age in 2006	1.01 (0.02)	0.528
Education Level	1.29 (0.33)	0.308
# of Children	0.86 (0.17)	0.437
Held Elected Office	1.30 (0.54)	0.529
Held Appointed Office	1.06 (0.49)	0.905
	N = 154	
	Pseudo R ² : 0.1082	

The important interpretation within this chart is on the gender variable. These ratio reported in Table 3 demonstrates that the odds of being involved in a leadership position in an education organization, a neighborhood group, a non-profit, or a women’s organization before running for office increases by a factor of 3.87 if the candidates is a woman, holding all other variables constant.

This suggests a strong relationship between gender and activities in the community that promote the development of leadership skills before running for office. Further, it suggests that women candidates have greater experience with group leadership

in the community before they launch a state legislative campaign. Because we are controlling for factors most often attributed to women's lack of participation in the public sphere (particularly children and level of education), we find that robustness of the relationship between leadership and women candidates all that more compelling. The suggestion of variation in pre-electoral experiences in the candidate pool from 2006 suggests a likelihood that women have had fundamentally different experiences in the community, with leadership, and perhaps in other venues before running for office. These data, as collected currently, cannot speak to questions of the socialization of competition, but they do suggest the need for further investigation of the differences between women and men in their pre-electoral experiences. In order to isolate the potential for cohort variation between women of different ages (which I hypothesize we will see in my research design), I run the following predicted probabilities using the logit model from Table 3:

Table 4: Predicted Probabilities	
Type	Probability of Leadership (95% CI)
Average Male	.24 (.12, .37)
Average Female	.56 (.38, .73)
Young woman, college degree, no children, no electoral experience	.43 (.09, .76)
Older woman, high school degree, 3 children, no electoral experience	.38 (-.01, .77)
Young man, college degree, no children, no electoral experience	.16 (-.03, .46)
Older man, advanced degree, 3 children, previous electoral experience	.25 (-.02, .53)
Average = Age 50, one child, previous electoral experience	

The results in Table 4 illustrate, the predicted probability of holding leadership positions before running for the Minnesota legislature. The probabilities of running are both different for men and women on average, and have divergent effects on older and younger cohorts. These results, as observed by the size of the confidence intervals, require additional research (and probably a larger sample size of additional cohorts of legislators) to substantiate more robustly. However, the predicted probabilities point our thinking in the direction that supports my other conclusions.

On average, women are much more likely to have had leadership experiences before running for office. Additionally, younger women are more likely than older women to have had leadership experience, particularly when taking account of average conditions of education and children for the older and younger cohorts. Men, on the other hand, are less likely than women to pursue pre-electoral leadership experience in younger cohorts, and more likely to do so in older cohorts. The predicted probabilities demonstrate the effect of the traits listed in the left hand column on the likelihood of pre-candidate leadership positions in non-profits, education, women's organizations, or neighborhood groups. They imply that there is a decent chance that gendered cohort variation exists between pre-electoral experiences to running for the state legislature. I argue that they indicate not only the likelihood of the sort of variation I would require in a sample group for the research design, but the need for further research into the variation the survey data exposes. With additional research in the method I outline, I assert we may be able to disentangle some of the gendered differences these initial findings reveal. Further, the age cohort variation make a case implying that an historical intervention occurred that has resulted in diverging effects for younger men and women from their older counterparts. Whether that intervention was instigated by the passage of Title IX, requires additional analysis.

Concluding remarks and remaining questions

Even one female equivalent of basketball great Bill Bradley would make a ground-breaking presidential candidate. Perhaps one former woman's athletics coach could fill former wrestling coach Dennis Hastert's shoes in a high-level, Congressional leadership position. A female body-builder, turned movie star, turned California

governor may someday campaign as Arnold Schwarzenegger did, thereby sitting well-positioned for a presidential run. Numerous football quarterbacks have filled seats in the Congress, and you do not have to look far to find less obvious stories of youth athletic lessons translated into political careers (Senator Coleman is not the hulking athlete that one would imagine from the other examples). The only current conundrum is that they are all men. With the Title IX generation coming of age, who will suggest to them that the field goals, shot-gun starts, miles of training, and defensive chalk talks have taught them more than how to play a game? Or has the dye already been cast and it is up to researchers to ask the right questions when this generation of self-assured and competitive women seek their places in the halls of power? The answers to these questions require additional research, along with continued support of youth, adolescent, and adult athletic programming for girls and women. Regardless of whether a Mary Lou Retton, a Mia Hamm, or a Cheryl Swoops ever chooses to run for office, increasing numbers of female athletes are learning to dare to compete. The political consequences of empowering and physically self-actualizing American women will not be guarded by the locker room door, the white paint of the sideline, or the finish line of a race—sports are changing women and women are changing politics. In the aftermath of Title IX and the cultural shift towards acceptance of female athleticism, competition in the political arena may never be the same.

Appendix A: Describing the Minnesota Legislative Candidate Data Base

As a member of the research team operating out of the Center on Women and Public Policy at the University of Minnesota, I worked to assemble the first of its kind database on candidates for the Minnesota Legislature from 1997 to 2008. The project was co-authored with Kathryn Pearson, Sally J. Kenney, and Debra Fitzpatrick. I worked as a research assistant on the project from May 2008 until May 2009, collecting much of the data in the final dataset and assisting with analysis of the data. I presented at the 2009 meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association Conference in Chicago, IL, as well as the 2009 State Politics and Policy Conference at UNC-Chapel Hill. We created the Minnesota Legislative Candidate Data Base so we could analyze Minnesota state legislative campaigns from 1997 through 2008. The candidate level data set contains 2780 cases, including all general election candidates, all primary candidates, and candidates who filed but dropped out before their primary election in each legislative election cycle over the eleven year period, along with candidates in a handful of special elections.

We collected the initial list of candidates from the Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board, compiled from all candidates who registered their campaign committee with the Board. We augmented this list with information from the Minnesota Secretary of State Election Results and Statistics website to ensure that we included all candidates receiving votes in primary and general elections in the full data set. We collected vote share, party identification, and incumbency status from the Minnesota Secretary of State and the Minnesota Legislature online resources. We ascertained candidate sex through name identification and online searches of local media surrounding

the campaign. Candidates who ran in the pre-primary stage were only identifiable if registered with the Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board as endorsement information as state or local political parties neither collected nor maintained such data. We obtained campaign finance data from the National Institute on Money in State Politics.

We also collected district level information for each candidate in the data set. Minnesota has 67 Senate districts, each of these sub-divided into two subsidiary House districts. Elections for the MN House occur biannually (in 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008 in our data set) while Senate elections occur every four years, except two years after redistricting (in 2000, 2002, and 2006). We compiled demographic information describing each district from US Census data (including district racial diversity, constituent education level, and median income). Further, *The Politics in Minnesota Guide* provided information used to create a measure of district urbanity. Minnesota legislative districts host a great diversity of urban, suburban, exurban, and rural geographies. Using information from *The Politics in Minnesota Guide*, we categorized each district as rural, urban, suburban, or mixed in order to analyze regional differences in the gender dynamics surrounding legislative elections. We include a measure of district partisanship based on presidential vote share in each House district in the 2000, 2004 and 2008 elections.

These data allow us to explore longitudinal and cross-sectional trends in Minnesota legislative elections. We augmented this longitudinal data with an in-depth survey of the 2006 legislative candidate cohort. Conducted in the summer and fall of 2008, we surveyed all 527 major party candidates who ran for the House or Senate in the

2006 cycle. The 2006 Minnesota State Legislative Candidate Survey includes additional information regarding the candidates' political experiences prior to running, their experiences with the endorsement process, and their opinions regarding gender dynamics in their campaign. We conducted the survey initially via mail, including two follow-up mailings through the early fall of 2008. We then contacted non-respondents via email with an online response option, and then via telephone. The result of these multiple contact attempts yielded 247 responses and 37 refusals. The response rate not including refusals is 47%, and 54% including survey decliners. The resulting original data set allows for the opportunity to analyze, for the first time, gendered experiences in campaigns and electoral success in the state of Minnesota.

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