

## ALWAYS RUNNING: CANDIDATE EMERGENCE AMONG WOMEN OF COLOR OVER TIME

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Candidate emergence represents the final step in the process of thinking about running for office. It reflects the decision to contest a seat for an elective office. The number of women seeking congressional office in the United States has dramatically increased since 1980. Previous research on women candidates explores why women run, but new research on candidate emergence shows that women face different challenges and advantages based on their race and ethnicity. However, a one-size-fits-all explanation for the surge of women candidates would be misleading, especially as it pertains to race. We investigate these differences by disaggregating data on women's candidate emergence by race and ethnicity to examine how women candidate emergence theories work under explicit consideration of race and ethnicity. Earlier studies suggested that women of color face different electoral landscapes than both white women and men of color based on the combination of their race and gender. Moreover, the candidate emergence literature offers exciting and testable theories about the conditions under which women of color enter an electoral race.

We focus our examination on women running in House primaries between 1980 and 2012. We employ a time series analysis with the intuition that examining congressional elections over time will allow us to make general comments about the participation of women in congressional elections. We argue that theories of candidate emergence are conditional to the racial and/or ethnic identification of the

candidate. We find that many of the conditions thought necessary for women's emergence as candidates are contextual and temporally specific. Moreover, conditions that encourage women to run do not necessarily apply to

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women of color. One factor we identified as consistently motivating is the presence of women seeking office in the previous election. Our most notable finding is that women of color navigate politics differently than their white counterparts beginning with the initial decision to run for office. Our findings echo those of qualitative studies (e.g., *Sisters in the Statehouse* by Nadia Brown, and *The Latina Advantage* by Christina Bejarano) which document the importance of focusing on the intersection of race and gender in politics.

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