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Essays on Co-Racial Campaign Contributions

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Essays on Co-Racial Campaign Contributions

by

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Dr. Karthick Ramakrishnan, Chairperson

Much of the phenomena we investigate in political science is driven by a normative prescription of equality (Dahl, 2006). As a result, many of the questions pursued in political science relate to explaining why we see **inequality** and seek to identify the factors that explain it. The notion that every individual is equal and deserves to have his or her preferences accounted for is central to how many think about American politics. The extent to which any group of political voices are unrepresentative of the general public represents a *participatory distortion* and is a direct challenge to our democratic norms (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995; Schlozman, Verba, and Brady, 2012). Left unchecked, these distortions have the potential to lead to unequal political outcomes. Despite these concerns, the vast majority of scholarly work that seeks to explain participatory distortion, particularly by racial and ethnic groups, have largely focused on a single act of political participation, voting. Rather than focusing our attention on the most *egalitarian* method of political participation, I argue that we should instead consider the act of participation where we find the *most inequality* and coincidentally the most potential for influence-campaign contributions. The goal of my dissertation project is to contribute to the limited understanding of how ethnoracial identity informs political participation and representation in the

United States by focusing on the relationship of racial and ethnic identity and campaign contribution behavior. Our theoretical expectations of campaign contributors have largely focused on explaining the behavior of donors in the context of conventional theories of political participation and behavior. These theories emphasize the role that partisanship and ideology play in the strategic decisions that donors make. However, much of this literature fails to consider one's race or ethnicity may influence these decisions despite the fact that in other areas of scholarship, the relationship between race or ethnicity and behavior is well known. The central question which drives the focus of this dissertation is: **Are donors belonging to marginalized groups different from those who do not?** I answer this question by using data from both public opinion surveys and large-N administrative contribution records. I apply a novel method of estimating race/ethnicity to look at donor contribution patterns in the House of Representatives from 1980 to 2014 focusing on Asian American and Latino donors, two of the fastest growing minority groups in the United States. I find that Asian Americans and Latinos do not fit conventional expectations for donor behavior. Rather than prioritizing characteristics such as ideology or incumbency status, donors belonging to these groups appear to hold persistent preferences for candidates with whom they share a racial or ethnic background. I argue that in order to fully understand the behavior of Asian American and Latino donors we must look to models of political behavior that incorporate the potential role that race and ethnicity can play.

To my parents

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Chapter 1

Introduction

> *"Cash rules everything around me CREAM get the money, dollar dollar bill, y'all"* - C.R.E.A.M. by Wu-Tang Clan

> *"If the American people understood how much time their representatives were expected — in some cases required — to spend raising money, it would shock their conscience"* - David Jolly, Former Member of Congress

> *"I think most Americans would be shocked — not surprised, but shocked — if they knew how much time a United States senator spends raising money. And how much time we spend talking about raising money, and thinking about raising money, and planning to raise money. And, you know, going off on little retreats and conjuring up new ideas on how to raise money."* - Dick Durban, Senator (IL)

Much of the phenomena we investigate in political science is driven by a normative prescription of equality (Dahl, 2006). As a result, many of the questions pursued in political science relate to explaining why we see **inequality** and seek to identify the

factors that explain it. The notion that every individual is equal and deserves to have his or her preferences accounted for is central to how many think about American politics. The extent to which any group of political voices are unrepresentative of the general public represents a *participatory distortion* and is a direct challenge to our democratic norms (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995; Schlozman, Verba, and Brady, 2012. Left unchecked, these distortions have the potential to lead to unequal political outcomes.

Despite these concerns, the vast majority of scholarly work that seeks to explain participatory distortion, particularly by racial and ethnic groups, have largely focused on a single act of political participation, voting. Rather than focusing our attention on the most *egalitarian* method of political participation, I argue that we should instead consider the act of participation where we find the *most inequality* and coincidentally the most potential for influence-campaign contributions.

The start of every campaign for public office often begins with aspiring candidates building a list of potential donors to support their cause. Candidates who are able to win office usually need to start fundraising immediately for their re-election campaign. In fact, for some members of the House of Representatives the amounts needed to retain their seat can be staggering. Not surprisingly, the amount of money congressional candidates have spent on midterm elections rose to more than four billion dollars in the most recent midterm. In 2018, the average house candidate spent over two million dollars to win their seat compared to more than 959 thousand dollars for losing candidates, with the most expensive non-special election race costing more than 23 million dollars (CA-39) (Open Secrets). Importantly, even in a post-*Citizens*

United v. Federal Election Commission 2010 world, the majority of money raised by congressional candidates remains from individual donors.[1]

In addition to fundraising for their own re-election, members of congress (MC) must also raise money to support the party and other members in more competitive races (aka "party dues"). The amount of money each MC must raise is traditionally scaled accordingly to her/his seniority within the party. For the 2020 election cycle, the amount of money Democratic MCs must raise in dues ranges from $150,000 for lower-level members such as incoming freshman, to $1,000,000 for Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (Grim and Chávez, 2019).[2]

In order to reach the ever-increasing totals needed to keep their seat and pay their dues, MCs must dedicate significant portions of their time to fundraising. In 2013, a leaked sample schedule from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) suggested members reserve five hours a day for fundraising, an amount greater than the estimated time for committee and floor work, and constituent visits (Grim and Siddiqui, 2013). In 2016, Representative Rick Nolan (DEM, MN-8) said that "both parties have told newly elected members of the Congress that they should spend **30 hours** a week in the Republican and Democratic call centers across the street from the Congress, dialing for dollars" (O'Donnell, 2016). In fact, lamenting about the amount of time and attention spent on donors at the cost of constituents has become a tradition among retiring members of congress with MCs from both parties voicing their concerns Drutman, 2016). As the amount of money spent on campaigns continues grow, the words of Method Man have proven to be prophetic,

[1] *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* was a case brought before the U.S. Supreme Court in 2010 that overruled an earlier decision prohibiting independent expenditures by corporations. The decision allowed corporations and unions to use their general funds to pay for independent expenditures in support of candidates, which led to the creation of "Super-PACs".

[2] According to leaked internal documents from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC)

the resulting political reality is one in which our elected representatives spend **the majority** of their time engaging with and fawning over the small group of Americans who give political contributions.

This reality becomes increasingly problematic when considering the growing number of studies investigating the relationship between wealth and influence in American politics (Bartels, 2018; Gilens, 2015; Gilens, 2005; Gilens and Page, 2014; Page, Bartels, and Seawright, 2013). At minimum, donors enjoy greater access to policymakers than the constituents that elected them (Kalla and Broockman, 2016) and in some cases, may even receive better representation (Barber, 2016b. Despite the central role that money plays in American elections we know relatively little about the campaign contributors who support candidates year after year.

Existing studies of campaign contributors often consider how well donors belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups fit with conventional theories of contribution behavior. As a result, our contemporary understanding of campaign donors is one that primarily emphasizes the role that partisanship and ideology play. Decades of scholarship on minority political participation, racial and ethnic identity, and preferences for descriptive representation, however, suggest that we **should** expect meaningful differences in contributor behavior by race or ethnicity.[3] This dissertation then, looks to unpack the dynamics of Asian American and Latino donor behavior. Why study these donors? Several reasons exist.

[3]For the purposes of this dissertation, I follow previous scholarship that uses term race or ethnicity interchangeably. Similarly, I use the phrase "ethnoracial" to refer to the same concept of race or ethnicity.

The importance of the donor class in context

Understanding the participatory distortion among campaign donors takes on even more importance when we consider the role they play in the context of two important trends in American politics: a diversifying electorate and the persistent underrepresentation for Asian Americans and Latinos. In 2000, Latinos and Asian Americans made up less than 10% of the electorate (7.4% and 2.5% respectively) and are projected to make up nearly **double** that in 2020, or nearly 1 in 3 eligible voters (Cilluffo and Fry, 2019). Similarly, since 2000, 109 U.S. counties in 22 states became majority non-White. In fact, perhaps most telling is that in 2020 more than **half** of Americans 18 and under will be non-White.

Over the same time period, the number of Asian Americans and Latinos elected to Congress has also grown, with 17 Asian Americans (up from just 7 in 2001) and 43 Latinos (up from 19 in 2001) serving in the 116th congress (Bialik, 2019). This is at least in part driven by the substantial increase in the number of Asian Americans running for office at the federal level with 32 in 2018 more than double than in 2010 (Shah and Shao, 2018). Similarly, the number of Latinos running for the House of representatives has more than doubled since 1980, representing less than 2% of all candidates in 1980 to nearly 8% in 2016.[4] However, despite this growth, both groups still lag far behind other racial groups in terms of their representativeness to the U.S. population. Despite the fact that 116th Congress is the most diverse ever, Latinos make of 9% of lawmakers in the House compared to 18% of the U.S. population. Similarly, Asian Americans represent 6% of the U.S. population, but just 3% of House members. In comparison, 12% of House members are Black, which is roughly equal to their share of the U.S. population (Bialik, 2019).

[4]See Figure B.2 in the Appendix.

Consequences for minority candidates and representation

> *"Being an Asian American, so either Asian American or a woman of color, those are also interest areas... [where] I feel that I have a responsibility to speak."* - Grace Meng (NY-6)

> *"Although, you may not be in my district and, you may not have voted for me, I will be your United States Congressman, I will represent your values, I will represent your dreams, I will represent your hopes and I intend to represent your aspirations and those of your children."* - Raja-Krishnamoorthi (IL-8)

Representatives belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups often view themselves as speaking for people outside their own district and serve as symbolic or surrogate representatives for Asian Americans and Latinos across the country. However, when it comes to drawing on these groups for support in their re-election campaigns, candidates are not able to count these "constituents" towards their vote total since they live outside their district or state. Similarly, we have no way of concretely measuring the extent to which Asian Americans and Latinos are willing to support "co-racial" candidate unless we look outside the voter-centric paradigm that scholarship on this topic has largely focused on.[5] Instead, I argue we should look to the one of the few acts of political participation that allows for prospective supporters to meaningfully help their favored candidate from across district and even party lines. Surprisingly, the role that Asian American and Latino donors play in the electoral chances of minority candidates is largely unknown. Do they act as early sources of

[5]I use the term co-racial to indicate situations where donors and candidates share the same race or ethnicity.

support for burgeoning minority candidates? As a minority candidate becomes more established, do they continue to rely on minority donor support? On the other hand, what happens to that support in the event that a candidate's policy making decisions start to diverge from the preferences of these donors?

A classic example of this is Bobby Jindal, former governor of Louisiana, who in 2016, became the first Indian American to run for president. Though his presidential campaign was short-lived, his long political career from the House of Representatives, to the governor's mansion, and eventually to presidential nominee is emblematic of the unique dynamics of being a minority candidate. Initially, his success in Louisiana politics was hailed as a symbolic victory and celebrated by Indian Americans across the country. In 2015, for example, National Public Radio (NPR) interviewed Sampat Shivangi a long-time supporter of Jindal living in neighboring Mississippi. "He was a young, dynamic personality. . . I thought he'll be the next generation of Indian-Americans to come up in public life" (quoted in Khalid, 2015). However as his political career progressed, his long-time Indian American supporters grew frustrated at Jindal's willingness to leverage his ethnic identity for fundraising but shy away from it in public.

Perhaps the apex of these frustrations was reached with his announcement of his bid for the White House where he said: "And I'm done with all this talk about hyphenated Americans. We are not Indian-Americans, Irish-Americans, African-Americans, rich Americans, or poor Americans – we are all Americans" (Ross, 2015). His response was met with widespread disdain from the Indian American community and even included a twitter hashtag: #JindalSoWhite (Lawler, 2015). In the same NPR piece, other Indian American supporters of Jindal revealed being conflicted, on one hand feeling "abandoned" by Jindal in his rejection of his Indian American identity, and the other hand reluctant to stop supporting him because of his significance as a

prominent Indian American politician. In all, despite the fact that minority candidates like Jindal are able to leverage persistent support from their fellow co-ethnics around the country (and even when they identify with another political party), we know very little about how donors belonging to these groups react to changes in their preferred candidates career and policy preferences.

Political contributions represent an important avenue for both Asian Americans and Latinos to "punch above their weight" relative to their share of the electorate. Unlike the vote, money is not evenly distributed in the United States, and the rules that govern contribution behavior are much more favorable groups like Asian Americans in particular, given their dispersed population. Further, donors are not limited to contributing to a single candidate in a single election, nor are they limited to the candidate running in their district. Thus, the importance of understanding the behavior and motivations of donors belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups is in part due to their persistent levels of underrepresentation in government, their growing importance in the electorate, and the critical role donors play in our democracy.

Dissertation plan

The goal of my dissertation project is to contribute to the limited understanding of how ethnoracial identity informs political participation and representation in the United States by focusing on the relationship of racial and ethnic identity and campaign contribution behavior. Current theoretical expectations of campaign contributors are largely focused on explaining the behavior of donors in the context of conventional theories of political participation and behavior. These theories emphasize the role that partisanship and ideology play in the strategic decisions that donors. However, much of this literature fails to consider one's race or ethnicity may influence

these decisions despite the fact that in other areas of scholarship, the relationship between race or ethnicity and behavior is well known. The central question which drives the focus of this dissertation is: **Are donors belonging to marginalized groups different from those who do not?** I answer this question by using data from both public opinion surveys and large-N administrative contribution records. I apply a novel method of estimating race/ethnicity to look at donor contribution patterns in the House of Representatives from 1980 to 2014 focusing on Asian American and Latino donors, two of the fastest growing minority groups in the United States. Across each chapter I evaluate the extent to which Asian American and Latino donor behavior fits the theoretical expectations of a conventional donor or if an alternative model that better accounts for preferences based on race and ethnicity *in addition to conventional factors*. This project makes three contributions that expand our understanding of minority political participation and approaches to studying representation in the United States.

In chapter 1, I evaluate the extent to which Asian American and Latino donors fit the conventional view of a campaign donor. The conventional donor is one who prioritizes shared party affiliation, ideological and geographical proximity. However, these expectations are drawn from studies that either lack data on minority groups or do not explicitly account for the role race and ethnicity might play in influencing the types of candidates donors prefer. Looking across the three major analytical lenses that are commonly used to study donors I find that while White donors largely conform to the conventional view of campaign contribution behavior, donors belonging to minority groups such as Latinos and especially Asian Americans contribute in ways that do not match existing expectations and indicate a persistent preference for co-racial candidates.

In chapter 2, I contribute to the scholarly discourse on racial and ethnic politics and representation by offering a novel way to measure preferences for co-ethnic representation on a population that has been ignored in existing studies. The vast majority of scholarly work on preferences for representation adopts a voter-centric paradigm where voters are considered to be the population of interest. However, voting represents just a single type of political behavior and one that is bound by geographical limitations and measurement constraints. In this chapter, I discuss these constraints and create a novel measure of support for coethnic representation by estimating rates of coethnic giving among campaign donors. This measure improves upon previous work which rely on self-reported survey data, and other studies that are limited by the number of elections featuring coethnic candidates and the availability of voter data.

In chapter 3, I switch the population of interest by focusing on the targets of campaign contributions, the candidates. Specifically, I answer several important questions related to minority candidates and campaign contributions. First, I evaluate the extent to which minority candidates are more likely to receive contributions from co-racial donors after accounting for characteristics thought to be important for raising money. Second, I evaluate the extent to which this changes over time as candidates become incumbents, gain leadership positions, and broaden their bases of support. In the following section I review the scholarly work on campaign contributions and discuss how my dissertation will answer important gaps in our understanding.

Literature review

The extant literature has largely developed along two lines. First, conventional theories of donor behavior suggest donors are primarily motivated by ideology, partisan-

ship, and potentially access. These lines of scholarship fails, however, to consider the role that race or ethnicity play in the decision making process of donors. If and how these identities interact remains an open question. Second, studies of minority political participation and civic engagement have consistently identified important factors that relate to an individuals ethnoracial identity or immigrant experience that are also important for understanding participation. Yet, research on donating as an act of participation has lagged behind other forms and mostly relies on self-reported survey data to test these important questions. In the following section, I will outline the major lines of scholarship and theoretical expectations about campaign donors.

Studies of campaign contributors have primarily focused on three broad lines of scholarship: 1) the characteristics of donors, 2) their motivations, and 3) the strategies that donors employ. Or, put simply, who donates, why do people give, and who do donors give to? Scholarship that has sought to answer these questions have produced a series of findings and theoretical expectations that form what I call the *conventional donor model*. The theoretical expectations that inform this model are ones that are largely devoid of any mention of race or ethnicity. In the following section I outline the literature on campaign contributions across these three questions, beginning with who donates and the role that the civic volunteerism model plays in structuring expectations for the conventional donor model.

Who donates or who participates?

Political contributions represent one of the most costly act of political participation, requiring significant financial resources and thus, very few Americans participate. In the 2016 election cycle, less than 1% of adults in the U.S. made a political contribution

Table 1.1: Donor Versus Non-Donor Demographics

Characteristics	Donor	Non-donor
Income	0.456	0.339
Education	0.678	0.522
Share Female	0.455	0.594
Median Age	59.000	50.000
Share NH-White	0.828	0.750

[a] Income and education have been rescaled to range from 0 to 1.

of $200 or more compared to the 61% of eligible voters who cast a vote.[6] The high cost of participation results in a donorate that is significantly more wealthy, more educated, more White, and older than the voting electorate. Accordingly, Table 1.1 reports the demographic differences between donors and non-donors from the 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES).[7] These differences are also consistent over time.

At it's core, understanding who donates or *participates* in making political contributions is related to one of the foundational questions of political behavior: why do some people participate in politics and others not? Accordingly, the resulting theoretical expectations that inform the *conventional donor model* are ones that draw heavily from the predominant theories of political participation, explaining participation in donating largely as a function of resources and to a lesser degree engagement and mobilization.

[6]The 1% estimate is estimated from contributions records from the Federal Election Commission (FEC) which requires that the information for any individual giving $200+ be individually recorded as a matter of public record. This means that contributions less than $200 are omitted. However, estimates of contributing based on self-reported survey data from 2016 suggest as many as 12% of Americans made a political contribution and that this number has grown over time (Hughes, 2017).

[7]Attempts to compare the composition of the donorate have largely been limited to either relying survey responses of self-reported donors from nationally representative surveys, or responses from actual donors (validated through the FEC records)(Barber, 2016a; Brown, Powell, and Wilcox, 1995; Francia et al., 2003). However, recent work that estimates donor composition through the analysis of administrative records have reached similar conclusions on characteristics such as gender (Heerwig and Gordon (2018)) and race (Grumbach and Sahn (2019)).

One of the most well-studied findings in scholarship on political participation is the relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and participation. The **SES** model of participation argues that those who are of higher socioeconomic status (typically measured via education, income, and occupation) are more likely to participate in a range of political activities, including making political donations (Verba and Nie, 1972). This core finding has been replicated in numerous studies across time periods, outcomes, and countries (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman, 1995; Conway, 1991; Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Milbrath and Goel, 1977. This finding also holds when looking at particular groups such as racial and ethnic minorities and immigrants (Ramakrishnan, 2005; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). Later studies broadened the view of the SES model to encapsulate different kinds of "resources" beyond socioeconomic status, such as time, money, and skills (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman, 1995).

Despite the fact that the SES model enjoys widespread empirical support, it's approach and structure left behind unanswered questions. Subsequent work sought to develop a more complete model of political participation and civic engagement and specifically emphasized the relevance of other factors, such as engagement and recruitment, which culminated in the Civic Volunteerism Model (CVM) put forth by Verba, Schlozman and Brady. The core pillars of CVM include: resources, engagement, and recruitment, or as they authors put it:

> *"In thinking about why some people are active while others are not, we find it helpful to invert the usual question and to ask instead why people do not take part in politics. Three answers immediately suggest themselves: because* **they can't***; because they* **don't want to***; or because* **nobody asked***."* (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995)

Resources (measured in time, money, and skills) represent the first pillar of the CVM and the one which most directly relates to the SES model. Here, the authors note that despite the broad empirical support that the traditional SES model has enjoyed, it fails to explain the theoretical linkage between the commonly used measures of socioeconomic status and participation (VSB, 281). To provide a more through account, the definition of resources was expanded to encompass time, money and skills. By defining resources in this way the CVM is able to capture "resources" like free time and certain civic skills that are not correlated with socioeconomic status, such as those obtained though an affiliation with a church or organization.

The second pillar of the CVM is engagement which encompasses prior scholarship that highlighted the importance of psychological attitudes and resources such as political efficacy and interest in politics to explain participation. At the time, previous studies had suggested mixed results about the relationship between political efficacy and participation. However, these differences were soon disentangled after scholars sought to clarify the meaning of political efficacy into internal (relating to individual feelings) and external (relating to individual feelings about government (Balch, 1974. Following this line of scholarship, Abramson and Aldrich (1982) argue that the decline in election turnout in the 1960s was in part, due to declining levels of external political efficacy. Similarly, Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) find that individuals with the greatest sense of external political efficacy were much more likely to participate across several different forms of participation.[8] Studies of the relationship between political interest and participation have also consistently found that those who are more interested in politics are significantly more likely to participate .

[8]The authors measured external political efficacy using responses to two statements: 1) "I don't think public officials care much what people like me think", and 2) "People like me don't have any say about what the government does".

Recruitment represents the final pillar of the Civic Volunteerism model, which generally refers to how and where individuals get requests for participation. The authors argue that institutions such as the workplace, voluntary organization, or church not only serve as venues for the development of civic skills, but also are places for political recruitment and political engagement (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). This pillar is particularly relevant for groups that are still incorporating themselves like Asian Americans, who have consistently reported less contact by political organizations compared to other racial groups (Fuchs, 2019; Constante, 2018; Byler, 2019).

To summarize, the CVM provides an important foundation for understanding the characteristics of donors and largely informs the expectations of the *conventional donor model*. In the following section I will outline some of the major differences between the characteristics of donors compared to non-donors.

Donors are wealthy, engaged, and strongly attached to their partisanship and ideology

> *And the question is, why am I the lone candidate of color on this stage? Fewer than 5% of Americans donate to political campaigns. You know what you need to donate to political campaigns? Disposable income.* - [Andrew Yang, 2019 Democratic Presidential Debate]

On December 19th, 2019, the Democratic Party held the sixth of 12 planned primary debates for the 2020 Presidential nomination. Candidates were required to meet two standards in order to qualify: show at least 4% support in four eligible polls or 6% in two state-level polls and receive 200,000 unique campaign contributions. Among the seven candidates who participated in the debate, entrepreneur Andrew Yang was the lone candidate of color. Originally thought of as a long-shot candidate,

in the third quarter of 2019, records from the Federal Election Commission (FEC) revealed Yang had raised more than 10 million dollars, more than triple the amount he raised in the previous quarter, 4 million more than Corey Booker, 5 million more than Amy Klobuchar, and just 1.1 million less than Kamala Harris (Almukhtar et al., 2019).

What made his presence all the more significant was that Yang ended up outlasting Senators Kamala Harris (CA) and Corey Booker (NJ), two well-established politicians of color, with decades of political experience. When asked about the lack of diversity on the stage he responded by pointing out the fact that fewer than 5% of Americans donate to political campaigns, and that disposable income is a critical requirement to participate. Yang's ability to fund raise allowed him to stay in the race longer than several candidates who were early picks for winning the nomination, but his point underlines the importance of economic resources when it comes to participation in donating.

Compared to other forms of political participation (i.e. voting), the role that resources, and specifically income, play in the likelihood of donating is much more important (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady, 2012; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995).

> *"In fact, while an number of factors, ranging from civic skills to interest in politics, are associated with such participatory acts as working in a campaign, attending a local community meeting, or contacting a public official, only one factor,* ***family income****, strongly predicts the size of the contributions made to political campaigns and causes".*(Schlozman, Verba, and Brady, 2012)

Part of the reason why studies of donors have failed to consider alternative explanations as to why some people donate and others do not is the fact that at the

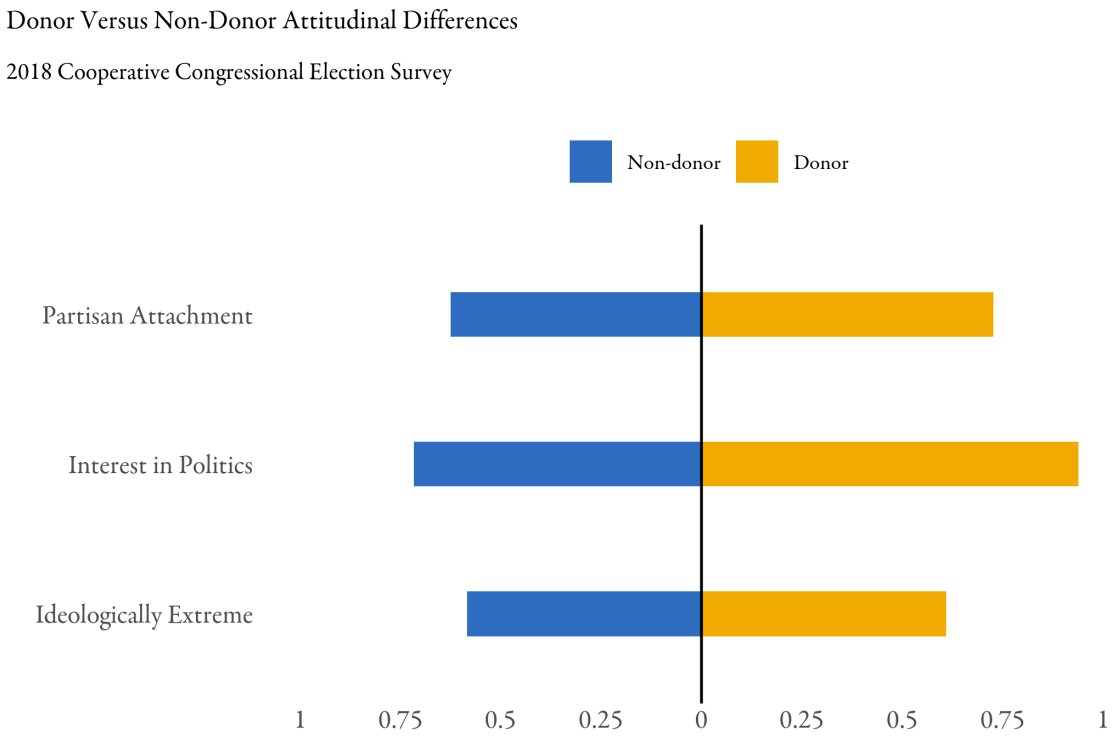


Figure 1.1: Donors Vs. Non-donors

time, the donor population was largely homogeneous. In one of the earliest attempts to measure the attitudes and opinions of donors (Brown, Powell, and Wilcox, 1995) conducted surveys of contributors to presidential candidates in 1988 and 1992 found that contributor pools were disproportionately male and White, in part due to the nature of how contributor pools are defined and mobilized. Similarly, later work by Francia et al. (2003), found that 76% of donors to congressional campaigns in 1996 were male and 95% were White which stands in stark difference to their respective shares of U.S. citizens (48% male and 75% White).[9]

Looking to the other components of the CVM, several studies have sought to further unpack this question by moving beyond the demographic differences between

[9]Table 2.5 in Francia et al. (Francia et al., 2003, p. 20)

donors and non-donors and to variation in attitudes and policy preferences. These studies generally find that donors tend to be more politically engaged than non-donors (Brown, Hedges, and Powell, 1980; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995; Hughes, 2017), and are more ideologically extreme (Brown, Powell, and Wilcox, 1995; Hill and Huber, 2017). Similarly, estimates from the 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES) reported Figure 2.1 align with these findings, with self-reported donors being more strongly attached to their partisanship, more ideologically extreme, and more interested in politics. These findings are not that surprising given that they largely align with the characteristics that the CVM would expect for individuals who are more likely to participate across all modes of participation. However, there are some important nuances that are worth mentioning.

First, in their study of the contemporary donorate Hill and Huber (2017) find that in addition to being more ideologically extreme than non-donors, donors also appear to be sensitive to the perceived "stakes" of the election. The authors find that that respondents are more likely to contribute as the estimated difference between their party and the other party increases. In order words, they find that under certain circumstances, a Republican who perceives Democrats as ideologically extreme are significantly more likely to contribute than if they perceived the Democrat as ideologically moderate. Second, other studies find that with respect to policy issues, Republican donors more conservative on economic issues and Democratic donors are more liberal on social issues than their fellow non-donating partisans (Broockman and Malhotra, 2018).

In sum, when thinking about who donates, the expectations of the *conventional donor model* are heavily informed by the predominant model of political participation, with specific attention paid to the role that resources (income) play. The conventional

donor model expects that individuals are more likely to donate if they are wealthy, highly engaged or interested in politics, and are strongly attached to their partisanship or ideology.

An ethnoracial model of donors

Looking to alternative explanations for understanding who donates, scholarship that sits at the intersection of race and ethnic politics and political participation. Studies have shown in a variety of ways that conventional models of political participation, even ones like the CVM are **incomplete** in their ability to explain variation in participation for racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. These studies are critical for understanding differences in participation rates **within** racial and ethnic minority groups. Scholarship on Asian Americans and Latinos for example, point to factors that are related to the immigrant experience of socialization and acculturation that are also important for understanding participation.Wong, Ramakrishnan, et al. (2011) highlight that for a largely immigrant-based group like Asian Americans, the process of adapting and integrating into American life may be **as powerful** as conventional factors like socioeconomic status in explaining political participation. Specifically, the authors find that for some acts, participation is more likely among those who have become integrated in American life either through generational differences (i.e. 3rd generation versus 1st generation), length of stay in the United States, English language proficiency, and ethnic news consumption.[10] Similarly, Ramakrishnan and Shah (2016) find that Latinos and Asian Americans become more active in non-civic political activities over successive generations.

[10]See Bedolla and Loza (2016) for an overview of the scholarship highlighting a similar set of factors for Latinos.

Especially related to the engagement component of the CVM, scholarship on racial and ethnic minorities have also highlighted the important role that psychological attitudes such as group consciousness or linked fate are also important for explaining participation in racial and ethnic minority groups such as Asian Americans, Blacks, and Latinos. Here, studies sought to expand the concept of linked fate from its origins in describing the attitudes held by Blacks in the United States that their chances for individual success are deeply tied to the success of Blacks in the U.S. overall (Dawson, 1995). Specifically, these studies evaluated the extent to which the concept of linked fate or group consciousness could be applied to other racial and ethnic minorities in the US, such as Asian Americans and Latinos (Gay, Hochschild, and White, 2016; Masuoka, 2006; Sanchez, 2008).[11] Importantly, this concept proved valuable when applied to understanding rates of political participation among racial and ethnic minority groups. Here, scholarship has shown that racial and ethnic minorities with stronger attachments to their race or ethnicity tend to participate at higher rates (Chong and Rogers, 2005; Lien, 1994; Lien, Conway, and Wong, 2004; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade, 2001; Sanchez, 2006; Stokes-Brown, 2006; Bobo and Gilliam, 1990; Wong, Lien, and Conway, 2005).

Another important aspect of race and ethnicity is the potential mobilizing effect that minority candidates can have on participation. These expectations come from scholarship on ethnic voting and the potential mobilizing effect of coethnic candidates. "ethnic voting" is the notion that ones race or ethnicity plays a major role in politics either via party identification, through candidate choice, or participation (Wolfinger, 1965; Bobo and Gilliam, 1990; Shah, 2014). Subsequent work on this phenomena has resulted in a mixed set of findings, with some studies finding that groups like Latinos

[11]Here, a separate but related question is asked about the extent to which Asians and Latinos are attached to their particular ethnic group (i.e. Chinese American) versus being attached to a broader pan-ethnic identity.

are in fact mobilized by the presence of Latino candidates (Barreto, 2007), while other studies point to other factors such as the overall size of the Latino population (Fraga, 2016) as being the driving factor.[12] Recent work by Grumbach and Sahn (2019) draws on this scholarship and evaluates the extent to which minority donors are "mobilized" by the presence of minority candidates. This study gives us the first set of empirical evidence that suggests the "ethnic-candidate paradigm" is important for understanding **donor** behavior. Looking at contributions in U.S. House elections, the authors find that the presence of minority candidates in an election increases both the share (+10%) and amount (more than double) of coethnic contributions.

Taken together, we are left with a competing set of expectations as to the role that race and ethnicity should play in understanding participation in donating. On one hand, studies of minority political participation suggest the importance of additional distinct factors that are critical for explaining participation for groups like Asian Americans and Latinos. Importantly, these studies do not necessarily refute the value of conventional models of political participation like the CVM, rather they argue that these factors compliment those core components to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the forces influencing participation among these groups. This leaves us with puzzle. Do these findings generalize to donating? On the other hand, it is clear that donating is an exceptionally rare act of political participation and one that is more stratified by socioeconomic resources than perhaps any other form of participation. Given such high costs associated with donating, we might expect that the additional factors relating to race and ethnicity may ultimately not make a difference with respect to explaining the participation of these groups. In the next section I review the scholarship on the motivations for giving.

[12]In addition, some studies suggest that shared race or ethnicity can be used to appeal or mobilize Asian Americans in other forms of political and civic engagement (Phoenix and Arora, 2018).

Why do people give?

People donate to political campaigns because they can. Beyond this simple explanation however, there are number of reasons to possible motivations for giving. In the following section, I review the two sides of this debate, contributions as a consumptive activity versus contributions as an investment.

Consumption versus investment

In this debate, scholars have argued that contributions represent *investments*, with real expectations of material benefits (Gordon, Hafer, and Landa, 2007) similar to the behavior of interest groups and PACs (Fouirnaies and Hall, 2018). Here, donors make contributions with the intended effect of influencing policy outcomes, preferential treatment, or gaining access to policymakers (Aldrich et al., 2017; Rubenzer, 2011). The investment framework is informed by scholarship on interest groups, PACS, and political organizations. In particular, proponents of this view draw theoretical expectations that are rooted in Mancur Olson's Logic of Collective Action which are further refined into more explicit terms by James Q. Wilson in Political Organizations. Donors are incentivized to contribute because of tangible rewards (material incentives) such as patronage, or policy changes with a monetary value, intangible rewards (solidary incentives) such as the social benefit from associating with elites, and purposive incentives such as supporting a particular policy outcome (Clark and Wilson, 1961).[13]

Early influential work that explicitly looked at individual donors suggests that at least some portion of donors may view contributions as investments. Studies suggest that some donors are motivated by the prospect of gaining access to policymakers for

[13]Similarly, Johnson (2013)) adopts Clark and Wilsons material and solidary incentive framework and breaks out purposive incentives into subcategories.

future returns (Brown, Hedges, and Powell, 1980; Brown, Powell, and Wilcox, 1995; Francia et al., 2003). "These 'investors' typically desire broad policies to benefit their industry, narrow policies to benefit their company, or even narrower policies to benefit themselves" (Francia et al., 2003, p. 43). However, there are a number of reasons to doubt whether or not this framework is generalizable to all donors. Early work on donors found that as little as a quarter of donors should be considered "investors" (Francia et al., 2003) and many of the studies that find supporting evidence are based on small samples of the most elite donors (Broockman, Ferenstein, and Malhotra, 2019; Gordon, Hafer, and Landa, 2007).

One the other hand, contributions can be understood primarily as an act of *consumption* and be viewed as just another way citizens can engage in political participation (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). Proponents of this framework make the argument that donors give primarily out of enjoyment rather than some expectation of material return. This view aligns with Clark and Wilson's **purposive** incentives, and shares similarities with the **ideologue** typology developed by Francia et al. (Francia et al., 2003). This framework is perhaps best argued by Ansolabehere, John M. de Figueiredo, and Jr. (Ansolabehere, John M. de Figueiredo, and Jr., 2003) who argue that if donors do indeed seek access or material returns from their contributions as the investment framework suggests, the amount of money contributed should be far larger in size and frequency then the vast majority of contributions that we currently see.

> *"In our view, campaign contributing should not be viewed as an investment, but rather as a form of consumption-or in the language of politics, participation... individuals give because they are ideologically motivated, because they are excited by the politics of particular elections, because they*

are asked by their friends or colleagues, and because they have the resources necessary to engage in this particular form of participation Ansolabehere, John M. de Figueiredo, and Jr., 2003)

Accordingly, the prevailing view of why most individuals give contributions is that they represent a form of expression of support based on ideology or partisanship (Barber, 2016a; Bonica, 2013; Ansolabehere, John M. de Figueiredo, and Jr., 2003). Donors may also be more likely to contribute to a candidate if they perceive the outcome of an election is important for partisan control (Hill and Huber, 2017). Thus, for the most part, donors make contributions as almost symbolic gestures of support, rather than an investment in a particular candidate or policy with expected returns.

An ethnoracial model of donor motivations

There are a number of reasons to expect that the motivations of Asian Americans and Latinos might differ from conventional consumption and investment expectations. Although the vast majority of scholarship on donor motivations fails to consider race and ethnicity, there are important exceptions that help lay some of the (limited) theoretical expectations for an *ethnoracial identity* model of donor motivations. First, in one of the few studies of Asian American contributors, Cho (2002) finds that Asian American donors give on more *expressive* grounds, prioritizing Asian American candidates even if they are running outside their district and have no chance of winning. Cho argues that these patterns indicate that Asian American donors interests are largely tied to ethnicity and a desire to express ethnic solidarity instead of other interests like influence. Similarly, the presence of co-ethnic also appears to mobilize contributions from minority donors (Grumbach and Sahn, 2019). To help inform my

theoretical expectations, I turn to scholarship on the intersection of race/ethnicity and representation.

Pitkin (1972) introduced the concept of descriptive representation, where individuals are represented by people who share similar characteristics to themselves such as race/ethnicity, or gender. Since it's introduction, scholars have consistently argued and found that descriptive representation leads to better substantive outcomes for racial and ethnic minority groups (Mansbridge, 1999).[14] It is of not surprising then, that numerous studies have examined the relationship between candidate race/ethnicity and descriptive representation for Blacks, Hispanics, and Asian Americans.

Taken together this scholarship leads to three relevant findings: (1) there is positive relationship between racial or ethnic attachments (measured by linked fate, for example) and preferences for descriptive representation. (2) acculturation may attenuate preferences for descriptive representation, and (3) perceiving discrimination may lead to greater preferences for descriptive representation (Casellas and Wallace, 2015; Schildkraut, 2013; Schildkraut, 2017). Other studies have shown that under certain circumstances, preferences for co-ethnic candidates will remain even when accounting for candidate quality. For example, Manzano and Sanchez (2010) use post-estimation simulations to show that when Latino group consciousness is at their maximum levels and their primary language is Spanish, individuals are significantly more likely to support a less-qualified co-ethnic candidate over a better-qualified non-co-ethnic candidate.[15]

[14]Reviewing the scholarship of the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation is well beyond the scope of this dissertation. For a through discussion, see (Griffin, 2014).

[15]The authors use a three-dimensional measure of group consciousness: (1) Hispanic racial identification, (2) perceived discrimination, and (3) support for Latino collective action.

Among Asian Americans, we see similar effects of group consciousness on support for descriptive representation. Using data from the 2008 National Asian American survey, Schildkraut (2013) finds that "respondents who have a hyphenated identity, a pan-ethnic identity, or a national-origin identity all have well over a 50% chance of opting for a co-ethnic representative, people who identified first as American have only a 19% chance" (716). Additionally, she finds that Asian Americans with higher levels of acculturation are less likely to indicate a co-ethnic preference, with respondents who completed the interview in English being less likely to prefer descriptive representation; some of the largest differences in support for descriptive representation when comparing generations. Respondents in the third generation and beyond were 20% and 27% *less likely* to prefer descriptive representation than those in the first and second generation.

These studies offer important theoretical expectations moving forward, but there are important differences between preferences for descriptive representation and co-ethnic or co-racial preferences amongst donors. First, the majority of these studies investigate co-ethnic or co-racial candidate preferences with respect to one's **own** representative (as in their legal political representative, at the district level for example). It is unclear how well these findings can translate to donors where they have the opportunity to contribute money to any candidate (or set of candidates) in the country. It might be the case that the relationship between group consciousness and preferences for co-racial candidates might not hold in the absence of a representative-constituent relationship. Instead, we must think of the relationship between co-racial donors and candidates in the context of *surrogate representation*, where legislators represent constituents outside their own districtMansbridge, 2003).

For surrogate representation the relationship between representative and constituent is explicitly defined by the *absence* of an electoral relationship. As Mans-

bridge, 2003) argues, constituents may seek out these representatives when they "lose" in their home district or state. Interestingly and particularly relevant for this project, Mansbridge also specifies an important subcategory of surrogate representation called *monetary surrogacy*, where citizens can use their discretionary income to support candidates outside of their district and and "find many of their most meaningful instances of legislative representation" (Mansbridge, 2003, p. 523). Although we have few studies that investigate surrogate representation with an ethnoracial lens, existing scholarship suggests that the preference for co-racial representation among minority groups may indeed extend to representative-constituent beyond district lines. Schildkraut (2016) find, for example, that when Latino respondents are asked if they feel represented by a co-ethnic candidate elected in another state respondents are more likely feel represented by a surrogate when they have a sense of linked fate.

Finally, studies on gender and candidate choice provide evidence finds that, under certain circumstances, female voters will hold a "gender affinity" or preference for women candidates (Dolan, 1998; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009). This preference is not without limits, for example, Dolan (2008) finds that although women voters seem to prefer women candidates, this preference is filtered through their partisan identities. Specifically, women may prefer female democratic candidates than men but that preference does not appear persistent for female Republican candidates.[16] These findings offer useful theoretical expectations for understanding how we might expect candidate preferences based on shared individual characteristics might interact with other attitudes and attachments like partisanship.

The results of these studies suggest that explaining the motivations of Asian American and Latino donors may require consideration of factors **beyond** party and ide-

[16]Scholarship on the intersection of gender and candidates has extended far beyond gender affinity and partisanship to include studies of candidate strategy, stereotypes, among others.

ological attachment and thus beyond the conventional donor model. Instead, donors we may be better able to explain the motivations of donors belonging to these groups with an *ethnoracial identity* model of donor motivation, one that incorporates the importance a persons individual attachment to their race/ethnicity in their motivation for giving money to a particular candidate. In the section I turn to the final component of the *conventional donor model*, donor strategies.

Donor strategies

Studies of campaign donors have relied on two primary methodological tools: surveys and administrative records. Early influential work on donors adopted a model that surveyed contributors identified from administrative contribution records (Brown, Hedges, and Powell, 1980; Brown, Powell, and Wilcox, 1995) to avoid potential problems with bias in self-reported responses. This approach has since been adapted and modified by supplementing survey responses *with contribution data* (Barber, 2016a; Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower, 2017) and making comparisons with non-donors (Francia et al., 2003; Hill and Huber, 2017). These studies have shown that individuals focus their contributions on candidates with ideological alignment and appear to give little concern to other access-seeking factors like incumbency status (Barber, 2016a). However, subsequent work suggests that while ideology is important, factors such as policy agreement, competitiveness, and committee membership in a committee related to the donor's occupation are also important for understanding who donors target in their contributions (Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower, 2017; Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower, 2019). Studies also find that donors are also sensitive to the geographic proximity of the candidate relative to themselves. For example, Francia et al. (Francia et al., 2003) found that donors were **35** times more

likely to make a contribution to a House candidate if they represent the donor's district.

Despite the popularity of these methods there are several important disadvantages with each. First, early work that relied on surveys resulted in samples of donors that are almost exclusively white. While it is true that the majority of donors in the US are White, this becomes problematic when we want to understand if and how donors belonging to other racial and ethnic groups differ in their contribution behavior. In response to this problem, studies of minorities in other arenas of political participation and civic engagement have relied large surveys such as the National Asian American Survey, National Survey of Latinos, or nationally representative surveys that include oversamples of these populations in order to conduct reliable analyses of these groups. However, this approach may not be feasible when studying donors belonging to these groups due to the cost of surveying this population given their size relative to the electorate. Second, the vast majority of these studies only cover one or two election cycles and not look at how donor behavior might change over time. As a result, many of these studies represent a snapshot of the electoral context at the time the survey was fielded and any conclusions drawn from these studies may not be able to speak beyond these limitations. Something that is critical given the rapid changes we are seeing in the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. population, it's electorate and it's donors.

Contributions represent conscious choices

Recent work on contribution behavior has moved in a different direction and focused **solely** on the availability of contribution records from the Federal Election Commis-

sion (FEC).[17] As part of it's responsibilities, the FEC maintains a database of individuals who have made contributions to political committees. Individuals who have made a contribution of $200 or more is itemized and their name, occupation/employer, address is recorded as a matter of public record.[18] These records are stored at the *transaction level* representing a contribution from a single donor to a single candidate and as such, the number of records is in the hundred of millions.

This line of scholarship takes advantage of the availability of administrative records to look at the *actual* contribution records of political donors. In contrast with other studies that have relied on self-reported survey data to categorize donor types (Francia et al., 2003), here, studies employ an inductive method to identify the various strategies donor employ and subsequently categorize them. Studies using this framework make use of the the fact that a contribution represents a **conscious choice** for a donor and thus can reveal underlying preferences (Rhodes, Schaffner, and La Raja, 2018). For example, donors who consistently give money to candidates outside their own district or even state are likely different than those who exclusively give to the candidate running in their home district. Before delving into the specifics of what these studies find, it is worth reviewing how the empirical strategy used in these papers are fundamentally different from other work.

Early scholarship that leveraged this data was influenced by work on spatial models of politics and measures of ideology (Poole, 1998) and first resulted in ideal point estimates of candidates, Political Action Committees (PACs) (Bonica, 2013) and later contributors (Bonica, 2014). These scores have since been compiled into the Database

[17]The FEC is a federal agency whose mission is "to protect the integrity of the federal campaign finance process by providing transparency and fairly enforcing and administering federal campaign finance laws" and was created in 1974 as part of amendments made to the Federal Election Campaign Act in 1974 ("Federal Election Commission: Mission and History," (**FederalElectionComission_**.

[18]From 1977 to 1988 the threshold for itemized contributions was $500 or more and was changed in 1989 to the present $200+ threshold.

on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections (DIME) have been validated under a variety of circumstances and used to study the ideological composition of physicians (Bonica, Rosenthal, and Rothman, 2014), judges (Bonica and Woodruff, 2015), and lawyers (Bonica, Chilton, and Sen, 2016) among others.[19] The DIME dataset is important for two primary reasons. First, it represents the largest publicly available dataset on campaign contribution records. Second, the dataset contains standardized contributor identification numbers which allow for tracking individual donors across contribution cycles. However, while these types of studies do allow for considerably more detailed analysis given the scope of the data, there are several important donor and candidate characteristics that are missing, such as race and gender that preclude analyses without augmentation.

Scholars have leveraged the availability of these records in a variety of ways to explain variation in donor strategy. Some studies suggest that repeat donors are more in line with an investment framework, giving to both parties, while infrequent donors tend to be more partisan and more likely to give to one political party (Heerwig, 2016; Heerwig, 2018). Similarly, habitual donors are sensitive to changes in partisan control of the House, giving more money to incumbents when their preferred party is in control and more to non-incumbents when their party is in the minority (Baker, 2018).Other studies use these records to examine variation in contribution patterns by candidate characteristics, finding that ideologically extreme candidates may raise more money outside their own district and are ultimately less responsive to their own constituents (Baker, 2016; Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz, 2008).[20]

[19]For a discussion of the validity of DIME scores see here.

[20]Interestingly these conclusions are largely supported when taking a purely inductive approach to identifying donor strategies such as latent class analysis (LCA) as in (Rhodes, Schaffner, and La Raja, 2018.

An ethnoracial model of donor motivations

Another set of studies have sought to move beyond the existing limitations to FEC records by augmenting this data with additional information. This allows for the analysis of these records by important demographic characteristics such as gender and race or ethnicity. Using individual-level contribution records Thomsen and Swers (2017) code each donor by gender and found that female Democratic donors prioritize female candidates over some of the conventional characteristics known to motivate contribution decisions such as district competitiveness, incumbency, and access-oriented characteristics. Using a similar approach, Heerwig and Gordon (2018) find that women focus their contributions to candidates alone (as compared to men who give to candidates, PACs and political parties), and they are more likely to give to only presidential candidates. Both of these studies suggest that there are distinct differences in the strategies employed by men and women with women following less closely to the expectations set forth in the conventional donor literature. Finally, and perhaps most relevant for this project, studies have estimated donor and race and ethnicity to understand differences in the behavior of certain groups, such as Asian Americans (Cho, 2002) and Latinos, evaluate the extent to which the presence of minority candidate mobilizes co-racial donors (Grumbach and Sahn, 2019). Although these studies are mentioned above in the context in donor motivations, they serve a dual purpose in giving us intuition as to how these motivations are achieved via the actual contributions donors make.

Scholarship on the strategic decisions donors make in allocating money to various candidates offers several important expectations moving forward. First, in terms of the *conventional donor model*, donors appear to make decisions that align with their previously described motivations that are guided by partisanship and ideological at-

tachment. Second, in addition to those considerations, studies of donor contributions suggest that donors are sensitive to other candidate characteristics like incumbency status, perhaps in part due it's rough proxy as a measure of candidate competitiveness. Finally, conventional donors may also act strategically by focusing their contributions to candidates running in their home or neighboring districts.

On the other hand, if we have good reason to think that Asian American and Latino hold distinctly different sets of **motivations** for giving as suggested in previous sections, it follows that we should also see those differences reflected in the **strategic choices** they make when donating. A donor strategy that is informed by an *ethnoracial identity* model of donor behavior expects that Asian Americans and Latinos should prioritize giving to candidates that share their race or ethnicity. Importantly, this preference for co-racial candidates should override other preferences such as ideological alignment, incumbency status, and geographic proximity. Thus, an *ethnoracial identity* model of donor strategy is one that does not **eliminate** the expectations of a conventional donor model, rather it expects that donors will prioritize their preference for co-racial candidates over and above other expectations. In the following section, I discuss the importance of understanding donors from a candidate-centric perspective.

Candidate Constituencies

Finally, I turn to the dynamics of the relationship between Asian American and Latino candidates, and the co-racial donors that support them. Recall from the introduction that there are several unanswered questions as to the relationship between these two groups. In the following section I address each of these questions and discuss possible theoretical expectations.

1. Do minority donors act as distinct sources of support for minority candidates?

Here, I seek to understand the extent to which the ethnoracial *composition* of donor networks for minority candidates is different from White candidates. Or put another way, how much do minority candidates rely on minority donors for support? Unfortunately, there is little scholarship on this particular issue as studies of minority candidates and elections have focused on other factors such as their emergence (Shah, 2014; Shah, Scott, and Juenke, 2019) and their electoral success (or lack thereof) (i.e. (Juenke and Shah, 2016). Importantly, most these studies have focused on the relationship between minority candidates and minority **voters**. Other studies do look at variation in financial support for minority candidates, but largely in the context of examining variation in party network support (Fraga and Hassell, 2018; Ocampo and Ray, 2019). Party support is especially valuable in the early stages of a campaign, typically including financial resources through actual funds or access to donor information (Dominguez, 2011; Herrnson, 2009). These funds are especially consequential as they can act as a signal to other potential donors of the candidates competitiveness and prospects for winning the election. For example, Baker (2014) finds that for candidates running as challengers or in open-seat races, receiving party contributions early on in an election cycle significantly predicts that candidate receiving additional money from Political Action Committees (PACs) later on.

Looking to women candidates, organizations such as EMILY's List serve as an early and critical source of funds for Democratic women running for office.[21] As the acronym suggests (Early Money Is Like Yeast), the dedicated source of funds represents a unique and valuable resource that also sends a strong signal to a candidates competitiveness. The existence of organizations such as EMILY's List suggest

[21]EMILY's List is a political action committee (PAC) that was started in 1985. They primarily fund pro-choice women running under the Democratic Party.

that under certain circumstances, women candidates may actually be at an advantage in their ability to raise funds from female donors. Accordingly, Thomsen and Swers (2017), provides the most comprehensive account of female candidate donor networks finding that while Democratic female candidates raise significantly more money from female donors than male Democrats, the donor networks of male and female Republicans are largely similar. In addition, when looking beyond gender to other characteristics such as ideology or incumbency status, the authors find that the contribution decisions of Democratic female donors suggest that they prioritize backing female Democrats in primaries for safe seats. Thus, we might expect that Asian American and Latino candidates running for office as challengers in safe seats might be better able to fund raise from co-racial donors than similarly situated non co-racial candidates.

Candidate donor networks over time

As a legislator climbs up the career ladder, wins re-election, receives coveted committee assignments, and eventually positions in the party leadership, their reputation and recognition quickly grows beyond their own district or state. The increased prestige, influence, and profile comes with greater access to a broad range of support, but also comes with a price tag in the form of party dues. Consequently, these factors often result in legislators raising money from an increasingly diverse set of donors. This pattern is perhaps most easily seen with the share of in-state versus out-state donors over the lifespan of a legislator. Although exceptions exist, in general, the longer a member of congress serves in office, the more amount of their money is raised from donors **outside** the state (or district) they represent. For example in the 2000 election cycle, Republican incumbent Paul Ryan received roughly 76% of his

contributions from **within** his home state of Wisconsin (Open Secrets). In 2018, now Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, received more than **10x** the total amount he raised in 2000 with 95% of it coming from **outside** the state of Wisconsin. Thus, it is clear that at minimum, the **size** and geographic **spread** of a legislator's donor network will expand over time. However, the extent to which that network might change in other ways, such as race or ethnicity is less certain.

Given expectations for the potential advantage that minority legislators may have in raising money from co-racial donors, we might expect that at the start of their careers minority legislators will raise a larger portion of their funds from co-racial donors relative to non co-racial legislators Similarly, as a minority candidate rises up through the ranks, we should expect that their donor pool to grow in size and geographic diversity, but still feature a larger portion of money raised co-racial donors compared to similarly situated non co-racial legislators.

Bounds of co-racial donor loyalty

Finally, thinking to the last question and whether or not donors will remain supporters of co-racial candidates if their policy preferences no longer align (such as Bobby Jindal's supporters), there are several important expectations. First, following scholarship on gender affinity and female candidates, I expect that while Asian American and Latino donors will prefer co-racial candidates, they will be sensitive to shifts in ideological alignment. For example, I expect that a co-racial donor will be more willing to overlook ideological misalignment with a particular with a co-racial candidate (as opposed to a non co-racial candidate). Similarly, I expect that when minority candidates shift their ideological positions, they will be more likely to lose non co-racial donors. In other words, candidates like Bobby Jindal may enjoy greater room

to deviate from the preferences of his co-racial donors because of their affinity for a co-racial candidate, whereas donors who hold similar preferences but do not share his race or ethnicity will be much quicker to abandon him.

Chapter 2

Are Asian Americans and Latinos Conventional Donors?

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reviewed the three major theoretical lenses that have been used to study campaign contributors: who donates, donor motivations, and who do donors give to. The resulting picture from these strands of scholarship forms the *conventional donor model*. Here, participation in donating is primarily a function of income, aligning with the SES model of political participation that has been consistently replicated in numerous studies. In terms of motivations, this model expects that donors are primarily driven to contribute to candidates with whom they share partisan and ideological attachments. Finally, when when thinking about the actual targets of contributions, the *conventional donor model* that donors employ mixed strategies, some prioritizing ideological and partisan agreement, and others prioritizing access by focusing on incumbents and those holding key leadership positions.

However, despite the extensive scholarship on the role and race and ethnicity play in explaining political participation, the conventional model is one that largely ignores these factors.

Thus, contemporary understandings of campaign donors and their behavior are left with what appears to be a crossroads. On one end, the participation, motivations, and decisions of donors are explained primarily by factors that assume the primacy of partisan and ideological attachments. However, much of this research fails to consider how race and ethnicity may influence or alter these expectations. At the other end, studies of racial and ethnic group participation and civic engagement have consistently identified important factors that relate to an individual's race or ethnicity and even immigrant experience that are also important for understanding political behavior. The results of these studies suggest that in order to fully explain the political behavior of racial and ethnic minority groups in other domains such as voting, we should consider factors that move beyond the traditionally used characteristics that prioritize partisanship and ideology. The tension between these findings leads to the first puzzle discussed in the previous chapter: *Are Asian American and Latinos conventional donors?*.

In this chapter, I answer this question by evaluating how well the conventional donor model fits with Asian American and Latinos in three areas: participation, motivations, and decisions. Across these dimensions, I find that the conventional model of contribution behavior fails to incorporate important differences between ethnoracial minority groups like Asian Americans and Latinos, and Whites. Instead, an *ethnoracial* model that incorporates the factors that studies have shown are important for explaining political behavior in other arenas also proves relevant when it comes to understanding campaign contribution behavior. In the following sections I outline the expectations of the *conventional donor model* across each of the three analytical

lenses and identify the competing expectations for an ethnoracial oriented model of campaign contributions.

2.2 Competing Expectations

Who participates in donating?

Recall from the previous chapter that studies of campaign contributors have consistently found that measures of socioeconomic status (and specifically income) are the driving factors for explaining who donates and who does not, with higher-status individuals far more likely to give than lower (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). In addition, studies generally find that donors tend to be more politically engaged than non-donors (Brown, Hedges, and Powell, 1980; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995; Hughes, 2017), and are more ideologically extreme (Brown, Powell, and Wilcox, 1995; Hill and Huber, 2017). Thus, these findings leads us to the following expectations:

- *Resource hypothesis*: Asian American and Latino donors who are of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to donate.
- *Partisan attachment & engagement hypothesis*: Asian American and Latinos are more likely to donate if they are politically engaged and attached to a political party.

However, recall from the previous chapter that much of this scholarship fails to consider factors relating to the distinct experiences of racial/ethnic minorities in the United States might moderate this relationship including: racial/ethnic identity attachment (Chong and Rogers, 2005; Lien, 1994; Lien, Conway, and Wong, 2004;

Ramakrishnan and Espenshade, 2001; Sanchez, 2006; Stokes-Brown, 2006; Bobo and Gilliam, 1990; Wong, Lien, and Conway, 2005), and mobilization and immigrant experience (Bedolla and Loza, 2016; Ramakrishnan and Shah, 2016; Wong, Ramakrishnan, et al., 2011). These findings offer several expectations:

- *Ethnoracial identity hypothesis*: Asian American and Latino donors are more likely to donate if they are strongly attached to their racial/ethnic group.
- *Immigrant experience hypothesis*: Asian American and Latino donors are more likely to donate if as they become more integrated into American politics.

Donor Motivations

The prevailing view of why individuals give contributions is that they represent a form of expression of support based on ideology or partisanship (Barber, 2016a; Bonica, 2013; Ansolabehere, John M. de Figueiredo, and Jr., 2003). Donors may also be more likely to contribute to a candidate if they perceive the outcome of an election is important for partisan control (Hill and Huber, 2017). For the most part, donors make contributions as almost symbolic gestures of support, as opposed to an investment in a particular candidate or policy with expected returns.

Here, the *conventional-donor model* expects *partisan or ideologically oriented giving*, where donors are more likely to give to candidates with whom they ideological agree or share party affiliation. Similarly, these studies identify another set of factors that are also thought to influence donor behavior, but to a lesser degree than ideology or partisanship. These factors are primarily oriented around candidate quality and geographic proximity. Specifically, that donors are more likely to contribute to incumbent candidates and those in-state or in-district (Barber, 2016a; Barber,

Canes-Wrone, and Thrower, 2017; Francia et al., 2003; Rhodes, Schaffner, and La Raja, 2018).[1] These findings yield several expectations for the *conventional donor model*:

- *Partisan-oriented hypothesis*: Donors with stronger party attachments will be more likely to value candidates in close races, and candidates who hold similar issue positions.

- *Geographic-oriented hypothesis*: Donors are more likely to contribute to candidates that are running in their district or state.

Recall from Chapter 1 that few, if any studies of donor motivations have explicitly looked at Asian Americans or Latinos, however studies of descriptive representation and candidate choice preferences offers several important theoretical expectations. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between candidate race/ethnicity and vote choice for Asian Americans and Latinos. These studies suggest the following: (1) there is positive relationship between racial or ethnic attachments (measured by linked fate, for example) and preferences for descriptive representation. (2) acculturation may attenuate preferences for descriptive representation, and (3) perceiving discrimination may lead to greater preferences for descriptive representation (Casellas and Wallace, 2015; Schildkraut, 2013; Wallace, 2014). Other studies have shown that under certain circumstances, preferences for co-ethnic candidates will remain even when accounting for candidate quality (Manzano and Sanchez, 2010). These findings lead to the following expectations:

- *Ethnoracial-attachment hypothesis* Donors with stronger attachments to their race/ethnicity will be more likely to value candidates that share their descriptive characteristics.

[1] Also see (Fouirnaies and Hall, 2018)

- *Immigrant-acculturation-hypothesis* Donors with stronger attachments to their race/ethnicity will be more likely to value candidates that share their descriptive characteristics.

Who do they give to?

Finally, the last component of this question involves the actual targets of contributions. Recall from the previous chapter, that scholarship on campaign contributions have leveraged the availability of administrative records to examine the actual *revealed* behavior of campaign donors. Here, the millions of contribution records that are collected by the Federal Election Commission represent individual decisions made by donors. These characteristics of these decisions (i.e. the race/ethnicity of the candidate, incumbency status) act as **signals** that explicitly reveal the preferences of each donor. In general, these studies suggest that individuals focus their contributions on candidates with ideological alignment (Barber, 2016a; Bonica, 2013; Bonica, 2014) as well as other factors such as policy agreement, competitiveness, and committee membership in a committee related to the donor's occupation are also important for understanding who donors target in their contributions (Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower, 2019; Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower, 2017; Hill and Huber, 2017). Finally, similar to studies of donor motivations, donors may prefer candidates that are running in their home district as opposed to one running within their state or across state lines Francia et al. (Francia et al., 2003; Rhodes, Schaffner, and La Raja, 2018). Accordingly, the expectations for the *conventional-donor model* are:

- *Incumbency hypothesis*: Donors are more likely to give contributions to candidates who are running as incumbents.

- *Ideological-proximity hypothesis*: Donors are more likely to give contributions to candidates with whom they ideologically agree

- *Geographic-proximity hypothesis*: Donors are more likely to give contributions to candidates running in their home district

However, in addition to these expectations, studies of racial and ethnic donors that suggest under certain circumstances donors belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups might preference to a co-racial candidate (Cho, 2001). Here, Asian American donors are willing to donate to a co-racial candidate even if that candidate has no realistic chance of winning. The preference to give to "less-qualified" candidates is one that we also see in other areas of scholarship such as preferences for descriptive representation (Manzano and Sanchez, 2010). Similarly, the presence of minority candidates may also effectively mobilize contributions from racial and ethnic minority groups (Grumbach and Sahn, 2019). These findings lead us to the following expectations:

- *Ethnoracial identity hypothesis*: Asian American and Latino donors are more likely to make political contributions to co-racial candidates

- *Ethnoracial identity hypothesis*: Asian American and Latino donors give more money to a co-racial candidate

2.3 Data and Method

I use data from a public opinion survey of Asian Americans, Latinos, and Whites, as well as millions of administrative records from the Federal Election Commission

(FEC). First, to evaluate the extent to which Asian Americans and Latinos are conventional donors with respect to participation, I use the 2016 National Asian American Survey (NAAS). The 2016 NAAS is a nationally representative survey that includes 2,238 Asian American adults along with accompanying samples of Latinos (n= 514), Blacks (n = 520), and non-Latino Whites (n = 500). The NAAS is unique in that it is one of the surveys of Asian Americans that interviews respondents in-language. Interviews were conducted via phone in English as well as 10 other languages (Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Hmong, Cambodian, and Spanish).[2]

The dependent variable under analysis is whether or not respondents reported making a political contribution in 2016. Specifically, respondents were asked if they had "contributed money to a candidate, political party, or some other campaign organization." The responses indicate that overall, 25% of NAAS respondents made political contributions with Asians and Latinos reporting lower rates of participation (17% and 13%) compared to non-Latino Whites (29%).

To evaluate the conventional donor hypothesis, I incorporate several measures that correspond to the socioeconomic status, political interest, and partisan attachment of each respondent. I follow prior scholarship by operationalizing socioeconomic status by including a measure of income (intervaled, 7 point scale), and educational attainment (intervaled, 6 point scale). To account for the other factors associated with the conventional donor hypothesis I include a measure of interest in politics (intervaled, 4 point scale), and a folded measure of partisan identification such that respondents are grouped into their level of attachment regardless of party affiliation

[2]Interviewing respondents is particularly important for Asian Americans, as 65% of Asian Americans speak a language other than English at home (Lopez, Ruiz, and Patten 2017)

(intervaled 4 point scale).[3]. Finally, I include age as a control. I estimate weighted logistic regressions for each racial group with the specification below:

$$\log\left[\frac{P(\text{Donor}=0)}{1-P(\text{Donor}=0)}\right] = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{Income}) + \beta_2(\text{Education}) + \beta_3(\text{Age}) + \beta_4(\text{`Party Attach`}) + \beta_5(\text{Interest}) + \epsilon$$

To evaluate the *ethno-racial identity hypothesis*, I include measures of racial identity attachment as well as factors that relate to the unique experiences of groups that come from predominantly immigrant backgrounds. For racial identity attachment, I use a question in the 2016 NAAS where respondents were asked to rate the importance of their race in terms of their identity on a scale from 1 to 5. I also include dichotomous variables indicating the respondent is foreign born as well as whether or not they reported any contact from a major party organization. I estimate weighted logistic regressions for each racial group with the specification below.

$$\log\left[\frac{P(\text{Donor}=1)}{1-P(\text{Donor}=1)}\right] = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{Income}) + \beta_2(\text{Education}) + \beta_3(\text{Age}) + \beta_4(\text{`Party Attach`}) + \beta_5(\text{Interest}) + \beta_6(\text{`Party Contact`}) + \beta_7(\text{`Foreign Born`}) + \beta_8(\text{`Racial ID`}) + \epsilon$$

[3]See Appendix for covariate descriptive characteristics

Donor Motivations

To look at motivations, I created a battery of questions that asked respondents to the 2016 NAAS their motivations for giving. This battery was initially based on prior studies of donors (Barber, 2016a; Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower, 2017) and was modified to include motivations corresponding to one's racial identity. Respondents who indicated they made a political contribution were presented this battery and asked to rate the importance of each factor when making a political contribution. Unfortunately, due to an error from the survey vendor, half of the eligible Asian respondents were not able to answer part of the battery, resulting in a significant drop in the total number of observations.[4] Nevertheless, it is still possible to evaluate the extent to which Asian respondents are motivated by different factors, albeit with some caution. The respondents where asked to rate the following factors:

- The candidate is in a close race
- The candidate's position on the issues is similar to mine
- The candidate will represent people like me[5]
- The candidate is from my state or district

Table 2.1 reports the summary statistics of each factors. In terms of theoretical expectations, the first two factors represent motivations for giving that would fall under *partisan-oriented* contributions as studies have shown them to be important for donor choice (Barber, 2016a; Francia et al., 2003). The third factor represents motivation for the *ethno-racial attachment hypothesis* in that donors holding strong racial or ethnic attachments should be more likely to weigh this factor heavily than those

[4]Similarly, the survey resulted in sample sizes too small for an analysis of Latino donors

[5]50% of the sample received "the candidate will represent [respondent race]s"

Table 2.1: Mean and SD Motivations by Race

Motivation	Asian	Black	Latino	White
Close Race	2.22 (0.12)	2.08 (0.19)	2.59 (0.17)	2.29 (0.17)
In State or District	2.01 (0.12)	2.28 (0.21)	2.44 (0.16)	1.68 (0.15)
Issue Similarity	2.9 (0.14)	2.93 (0.16)	3.01 (0.18)	3.07 (0.1)
Like Me	2.96 (0.13)	3.27 (0.14)	3.29 (0.13)	2.85 (0.11)

Source: 2016 National Asian American Survey

with weaker attachments. The last factor represents one of the common predictors used when modeling vote choice. Some studies have found shown that an important factor for identifying candidate choice among contributors is through accounting for in-district and in-state candidates (Francia et al., 2003).

Donor Targets

For the purposes of this paper, I subset the DIME dataset to all individual contributions to candidate committees in the House of Representatives from 1980 to 2016. As described in the previous chapter, in order to estimate the race/ethnicity of each donor in the administrative records I use a form of ethnic surname analysis that has grown in popularity in the analysis of voter files (Imai and Khanna, 2016), and contribution records (Grumbach and Sahn, 2019).[6] This technique has been applied to a variety of contexts including: medical records research (Adjaye-Gbewonyo et al., 2014; Elliott et al., 2008), federal monitoring of fair lending laws (Consumer Finance Protection Bureau), and political science (Imai and Khanna, 2016; Shah and Davis, 2017).[7]. This approaches combines surname analysis and geocoded data to estimate individual race/ethnicity via Bayes Rule.

[6]Although the use of this technique is popular, it is important to note the challenges associated with using surname as a proxy for racial/ethnic group, see (Sen and Wasow, 2016).

[7]I use the R package *wru* developed by Imai, K. and Khanna, K. (2016) `https://github.com/kosukeimai/wru`

As mentioned in previous chapter, to measure ideological proximity, I estimate ideological proximity by calculating the absolute difference between the donor and candidate for each contribution record. Similarly, I take the absolute value of district partisanship such that larger values indicate a district with a larger proportion of either party. In addition, I include several other measures including: candidate race, incumbency status, donor race, and amount contributed.

2.4 Findings

Who donates?

Recall that the conventional donor hypothesis expects that respondents will be more likely to donate if they higher on the socioeconomic spectrum. In addition, we should expect that the likelihood of donating will also increase for respondents who are more interested and hold stronger partisan attachments. In order to evaluate these expectations I estimate several weighted logistic regression models predicting whether or not the respondent is a donor. For each covariate I scale the numeric variables according to (Gelman, 2008) such that each variable is mean-centered and divided by two standard deviations. This transformation results in coefficients that are directly comparable to untransformed binary predictors. For each model, I evaluate the strength and direction of covariates that correspond to each hypothesis. The results of the first model reported in Table 2.2, suggest that for all racial groups, the core components of the conventional donor hypothesis are supported. For all groups, those with higher levels of income and education are more likely to reporting making political contributions. In addition, we also see support for other factors related to the conventional model of participation including party attachment and interest. Similar

to what we find with other groups, Asian Americans and Latinos who are strong partisans, interested in politics, and have higher socio-economic status are more likely to report making political contributions than their counterparts.

Table 2.2: Conventional Donor Hypothesis

	Donor		
	Asians	**Latinos**	**Whites**
Income	0.851^{***}	1.154^{***}	0.904^{***}
	(0.134)	(0.405)	(0.293)
Education	1.347^{***}	0.361	1.362^{***}
	(0.201)	(0.454)	(0.382)
Age	0.165	0.663^{*}	-0.909^{***}
	(0.131)	(0.378)	(0.267)
Party Attachment	0.465^{***}	1.013^{**}	0.840^{***}
	(0.132)	(0.429)	(0.305)
Interest	0.528^{***}	1.661^{***}	1.979^{***}
	(0.131)	(0.406)	(0.374)
Constant	-1.932^{***}	-2.016^{***}	-2.158^{***}
	(0.089)	(0.237)	(0.233)
N	1999	394	424

$^{***}p < .01$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{*}p < .1$

Source: 2016 National Asian American Survey

Recall that the conventional donor hypothesis suggests that ones socioeconomic status is the most important factor in determining the likelihood of contribution. Here, we expect that although interest and partisan attachment are important, they are secondary to socioeconomic factors. Figure 2.1 shows how the predicted probability of donating changes when going from the minimum levels of political interest and partisan attachment to their maximums while holding constant socioeconomic status. For both political interest and partisan attachment, we see little change in the predicted probability of donating when socioeconomic status is low, but consistent increases when socioeconomic status is high. The results suggest that the socioe-

conomic factors are indeed critical factors for explaining participation in donating. Interestingly, in Table 2.2, among Latinos and Whites, we see that the coefficients for partisan attachment and political interest nearly rival the the size of socioeconomic factors, compared to Asian respondents where they are considerably smaller.

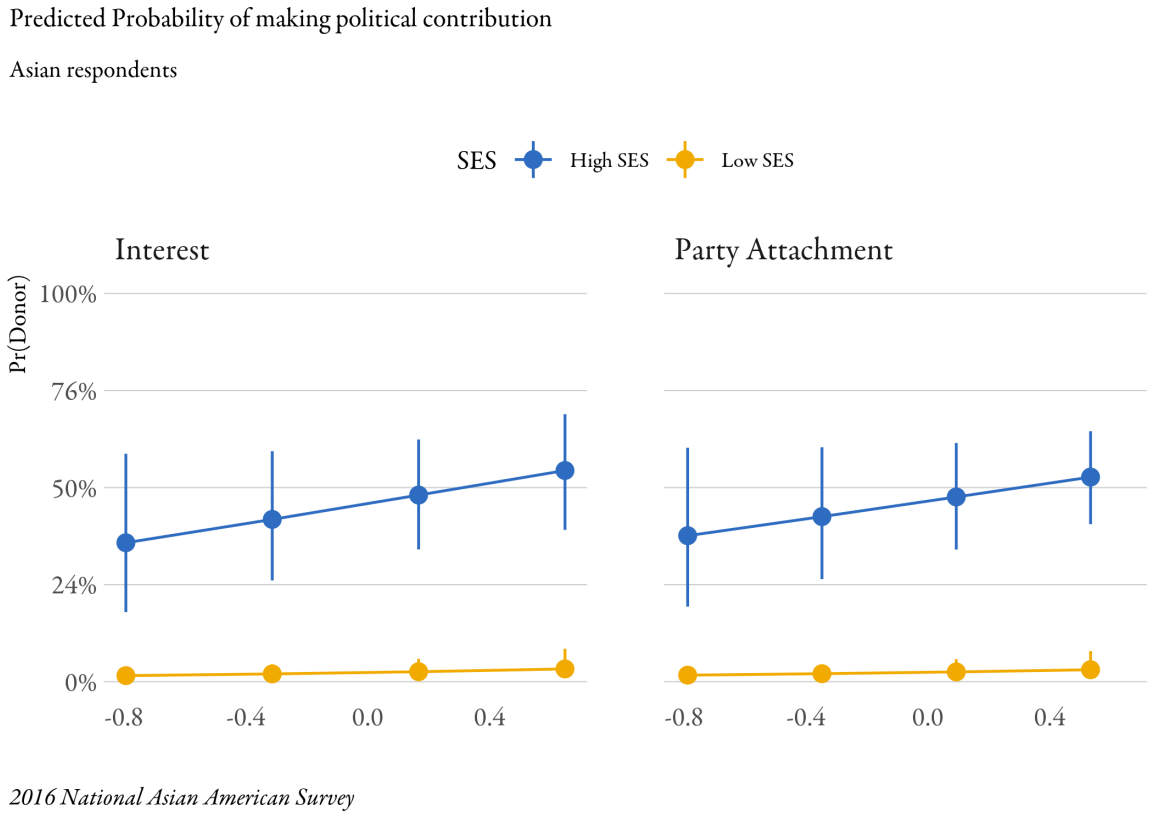


Figure 2.1: Probability of Being a Donor

Ethno-racial identity hypothesis

However, when we we include terms that correspond to a ethnoracial identity model of contribution behavior, we find some interesting differences. Table 2.3 reports the results of the ethnoracial identity model of donor participation. Here, we can see that across all groups, measures for socioeconomic status are positive and significant with the exception of education among Latinos. Interestingly, there are several differences

between Asians and Latinos with respect to some of the covariates. First, for both groups, the coefficients for interest are positive, but is significantly larger and significant for Latinos. Similarly, for Asians the coefficient for party contact is much larger (1.003 p<.01) than for Latinos (.146). Finally, in both groups, we find support for factors that relate to ones racial/ethnic identity both Asians and Latinos as well as factors that correspond to the immigrant experience of these groups.

Table 2.3: Ethnoracial Identity Donor Hypothesis Model

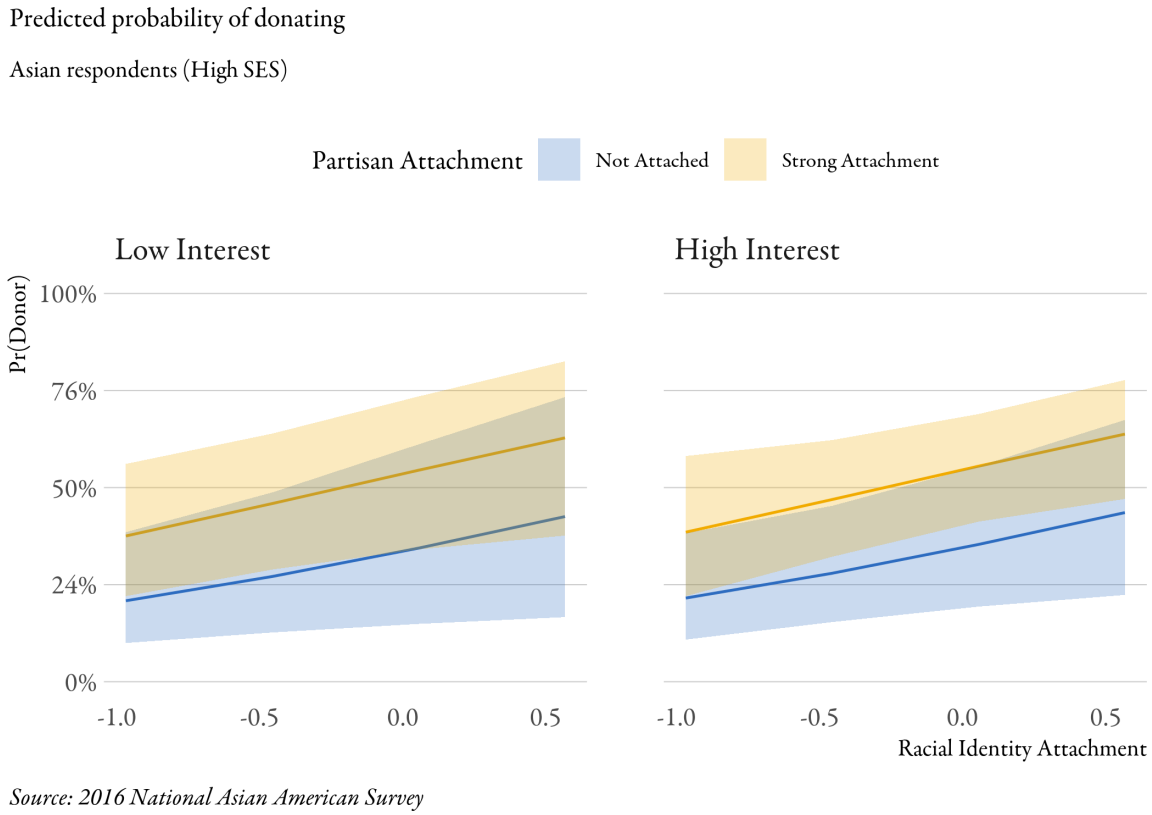
		Donor	
	Asians	**Latinos**	**Whites**
Income	0.920^{***}	1.049^{**}	0.904^{***}
	(0.227)	(0.475)	(0.293)
Education	1.715^{***}	0.500	1.362^{***}
	(0.369)	(0.524)	(0.382)
Age	-0.032	0.800^{*}	-0.909^{***}
	(0.245)	(0.436)	(0.267)
Party Attachment	0.625^{***}	0.945^{*}	0.840^{***}
	(0.225)	(0.492)	(0.305)
Interest	0.030	1.991^{***}	1.979^{***}
	(0.202)	(0.483)	(0.374)
Foreign Born	-1.029^{***}	0.207	
	(0.241)	(0.437)	
Racial ID Importance	0.673^{***}	1.306^{***}	
	(0.206)	(0.440)	
Party Contact	1.003^{***}	0.146	
	(0.209)	(0.411)	
Constant	-1.831^{***}	-2.286^{***}	-2.158^{***}
	(0.245)	(0.352)	(0.233)
N	925	329	424

$^{***}p < .01$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{*}p < .1$

Source: 2016 National Asian American Survey

Figure 2.2 reports the predicted probability of donating among Asian respondents while varying the levels of racial identity attachment, partisan attachment, and political interest while holding socioeconomic status at their highest levels. Beginning with

the left side of the plot, which reports the predicted probability of donating holding interest at it's minimum, the likelihood of donating increases as respondents become more attached to their racial identity. This patterns remains even when varying the level of partisan attachment. Similarly, moving to the right side of the plot, the positive relationship between racial identity and likelihood of donating holds when interest is at it's highest levels and regardless of party attachment. In addition, I find support for the *immigrant-experience* hypothesis with partisan contact having a positive and significant relationship on donating and being foreign born having a negative and significant effect on the likelihood of donating. These patterns align with prior studies of Asian American political participation (Wong et al. 2011).



Source: 2016 National Asian American Survey

Figure 2.2: Probability of Donating by SES and Interest (Asian Americans)

The positive relationship between racial identity attachment and donating is also seen among Latino respondents (Figure 2.3), though it is slightly more muted, suggesting that the factors relating to mobilization and engagement may play a more important role relative to Asians. In Figure 2.3 we can see that among respondents with low levels of interest and low partisan attachment the likelihood of donating increases as respondents become more strongly attached to their racial identity, though this difference is small compared to similarly situated Asian respondents (7% increase). However, when we look at Latinos with the highest levels of interest and the highest levels of partisan attachment, going from the minimum level of racial identity attachment to the maximum results in a nearly 42% (43% to 85%) in the likelihood of donating. These results suggest that for Latinos the role that racial identity attachment plays is most relevant for those who are actively interested in politics and hold strong partisan attachments. Interestingly in terms of the *immigrant-experience* hypothesis, the results are markedly different from Asian respondents, with both partisan contact and being foreign born having a positive but insignificant effect on donating among Latinos. These differences are not that surprising given the fact that most Latinos in the US are more likely to be native-born rather than foreign born like, Asian Americans.

Taken together, the results paint a complex picture of participation for Asian Americans and Latinos. Across models, the relationship between socioeconomic status and the likelihood of donating is consistent with higher levels of SES increasing the likelihood of participation. However, in the models that include factors related to racial identity attachment and immigrant experience, it's clear that socioeconomic factors only explain part of the variation in participation. For both Asians and Latinos I find support for the *ethno-racial identity hypothesis*, which expects that strong attachment to racial identity is associated with higher probability of donating. In

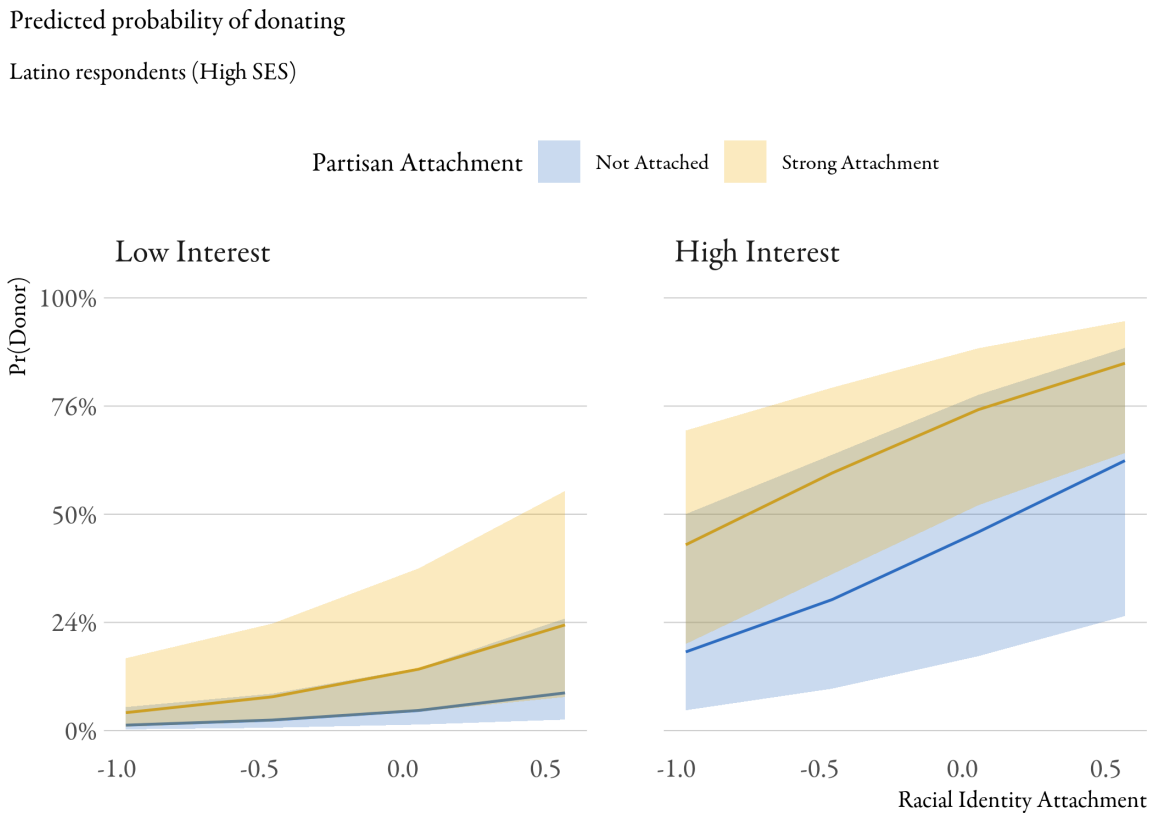


Figure 2.3: Probability of Donating by SES and Interest (Latinos)

particular, among Asian respondents I find that racial identity attachment outweighs both partisan attachment and interest whereas among Latinos, racial identity is second only to interest. In addition among Asians, I find support for the *immigrant experience hypothesis*, which expects that factors that relate to the distinct challenges that predominantly immigrant groups face are also important for explaining participation.

Donor Motivations

In order to evaluate the extent to which donor motivations fit with the conventional view of campaign contributors, I estimate an ordered logistic regression model for each of the four factors with explanatory variables measuring strength of racial identity

and partisan attachment. Table 2.4 reports the results of 4 ordered logistic regression models where the outcome variables are each for factors donors were asked to weigh in terms of importance. In each model I use the same set of covariates with the expectation that I should see differences in the types and strength of individual characteristics that are significant for predicting how much importance a donor gives to each factor.[8]

Table 2.4: Donor Motivation Hypothesis (Asian respondents)

	Close Race	**Issue**	**District**	**Like Me**
Racial Identity	0.029	−0.134	0.199	0.539**
	(0.154)	(0.151)	(0.169)	(0.213)
Party Attach	−0.220	0.741***	−0.256	−0.466**
	(0.163)	(0.157)	(0.179)	(0.224)
Interest	−0.389**	0.582***	−0.525***	0.147
	(0.152)	(0.145)	(0.165)	(0.193)
Party Contact	0.104	0.109	0.742***	−0.080
	(0.151)	(0.147)	(0.166)	(0.200)
Foreign Born	0.147	−0.444***	0.122	−0.167
	(0.161)	(0.155)	(0.177)	(0.222)
Constant	2.341***	2.911***	1.873***	3.145***
	(0.133)	(0.130)	(0.147)	(0.189)
N	165	166	169	92

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Source: 2016 National Asian American Survey

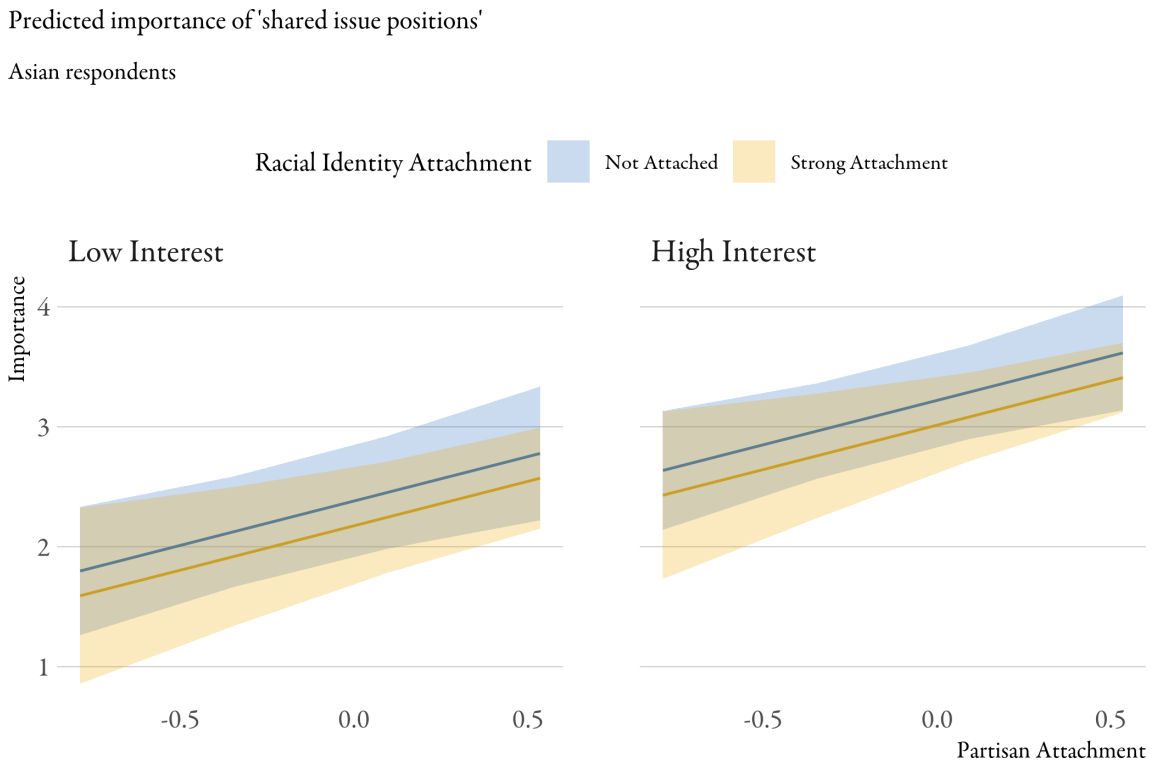
Beginning with the two factors that relate to partisan-oriented contributions (close race and shared issue positions), the results are mixed. Recall that the partisan-oriented hypotheses expects that donors with stronger party attachments will be more likely to value candidates who hold similar issue positions, and those that are in close races. When looking at the model for shared issue positions I find support for the partisan-oriented hypotheses, with partisan attachment and interest in politics

[8]I am only able to estimate models for Asian American respondents due to the previously mentioned survey vendor errors.

having a positive and significant effect on importance. In Figure 2.4, on the left side, we can see that when holding political interest at is smallest value, respondents with the lowest levels of political attachment give less importance to a candidate having shared issue positions when making contributions compared to those who are strongly attached (1.8 to 2.57). Similarly, even when holding political interest at it's highest level, those with weak partisan attachments give less importance to this factor compared to strongly attached respondents (2.6 to 3.4). In addition, this pattern remains the same regardless of how strongly respondents are attached to their racial identity. The results are less clear when looking at the model for "close race" where the signs for both partisan attachment and interest are flipped, though only interest remains significant. Finally, for both factors, the strength of racial identity is not significant and in the case of issue similarity is negative, suggesting that the importance given to these factors is not a function of a donor's racial identity attachment.

Next, we move to the geographic-proximity hypothesis which expects that donors are more likely to contribute to candidates that are running in their state or district. Here we see results similar to the model for "close race" with respect to the role that partisan attachment and political interest play. In Table 2.4 we can see that both partisan attachment and interest are negatively associated with the predicted level of importance of this factor. However despite this, we also see that party contact has a large positive and significant effect. That party contact is positive and significant isn't all that surprising given prior work that points to mobilizing factors like contact by party organizations as an important part of explaining participation among Asian Americans (Wong, Ramakrishnan, et al., 2011).

Moving to the factor related to the *ethnoracial attachment hypothesis*, we should expect that the Asian American and Latino donors are more likely to donate if they are

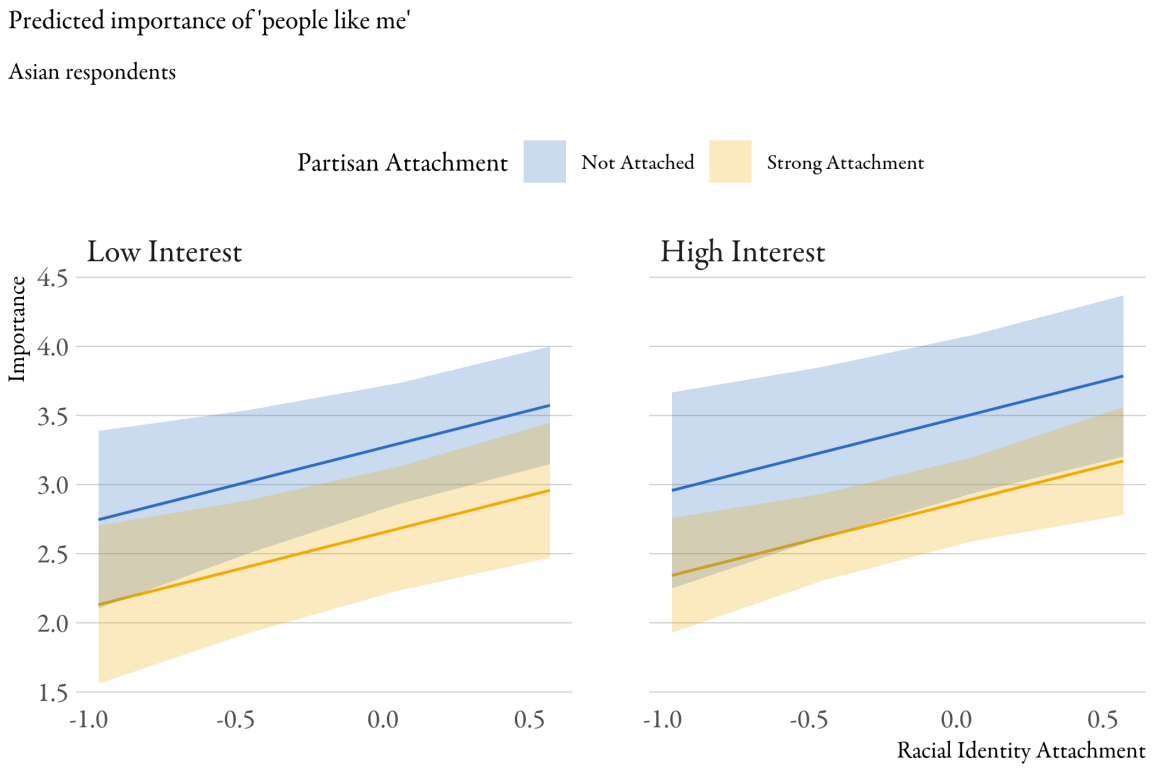


Source: 2016 National Asian American Survey

Figure 2.4: Predicted Importance of Shared Issue Positions

strongly attached to their racial/ethnic group. Unlike the other factors, racial identity attachment has a positive and significant relationship on the estimated amount of importance respondents give when making contribution decisions with respondents who are weakly attached to their racial identity giving less importance to this factor than their strongly attached counterparts.

Figure 2.5 reports the predicted value of importance of a candidate "representing people like me" when making contribution decisions. In this set of graphs I plot racial identity strength across the x-axis instead of partisan attachment. Here, we can see that when holding the level of political interest at it's lowest value, respondents with with the lowest levels of racial identity attachment give less importance to this factor compared to those who hold the strongest attachments (2.1 to 3). Similarly, when



Source: 2016 National Asian American Survey

Figure 2.5: Predicted Importance of Like Me

holding the level of political interest at it's highest levels, we see the same pattern with respondents who are strongly attached to their racial identity giving more importance than those who are only weakly attached (3.17 to 2.96). Finally, the pattern appears to hold regardless of the level of partisan attachment, and if anything, suggests that respondents who are strongly attached to their party actually give less importance to having a candidate who will represent someone like themselves.

In conclusion, the results indicate that when thinking about Asian donors in terms of their motivations for giving, partisan-oriented motivations may only tell part of the story. Asian Americans who hold stronger attachments to their racial identity appear weigh factors related to contributing to a specific candidate in ways that are different than what conventional expectations suggest.

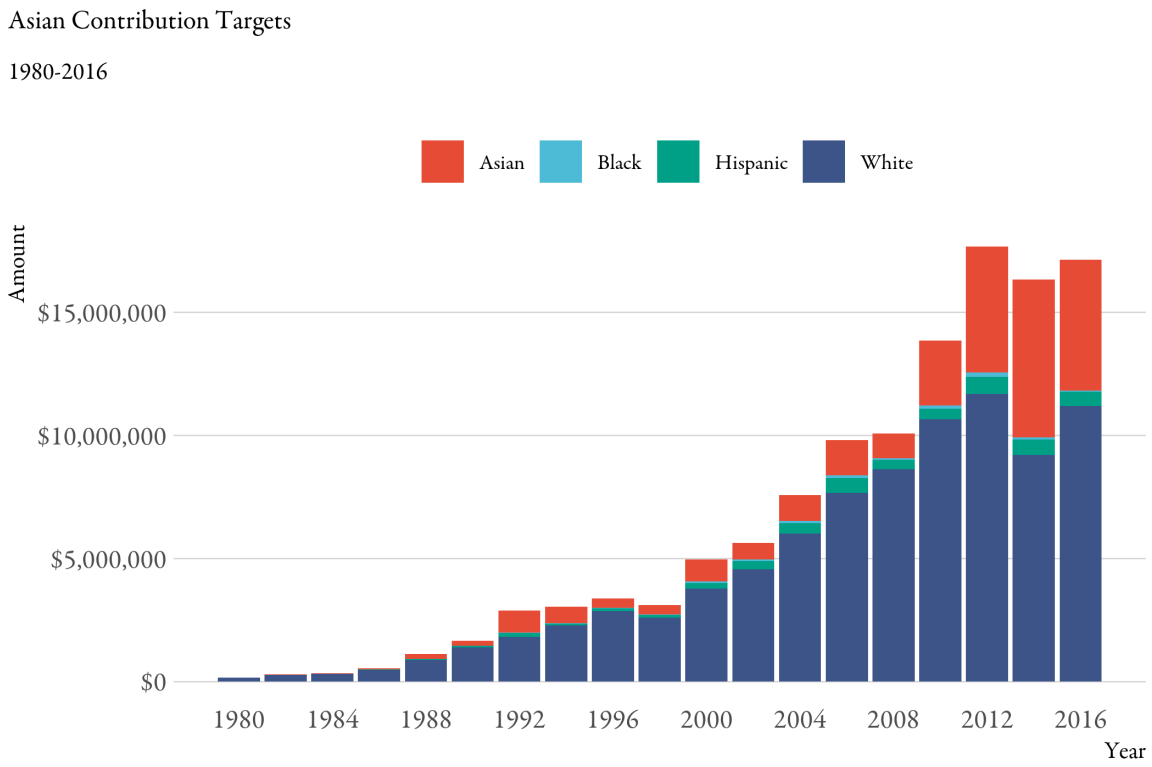
Who do they give to?

Finally, I turn to the parsed administrative contribution records that represent the individual decisions of donors over a period of more than three decades. Recall from Chapter 1 that Asian American and Latino have increased the number and total amount of contributions given over the past several decades. Thinking about the co-racial oriented model of contribution behavior, it is useful to look at the general rates at which both Asian American and Latinos contribute to candidates of different racial groups. Beginning with Asian American donors, we can look at the racial composition of the candidates that they give to. As Figure 2.6 illustrates, the targets of Asian contributions have largely been White candidates, with roughly 79.2% of the total amount Asian Americans contributed in each cycle going to White candidates on average. However, beginning in 1992, we start to see larger shares of contributions going to Asian candidates with steady increases in both size and share to the present day. Importantly, Asian American candidates constitute the next largest amount of funds given in virtually every cycle.

Similarly in Figure 2.7, we also see that White candidates consistently receive the majority of money contributed by Latino donors over time. On average White candidates have received roughly 64.4% of the total amount Latinos contributed in each cycle. Similar to the trend seen with Asian American donors, over time we start to see larger shares of contributions going to Latino candidates with steady increases in both size and share to the present day. Importantly, Latino candidates constitute the next largest amount of funds given in virtually every cycle.

In order to evaluate the extent to which Asian American and Latino donors hold a preference for co-racial candidates we can look at rates of *co-racial giving*.[9] In Table

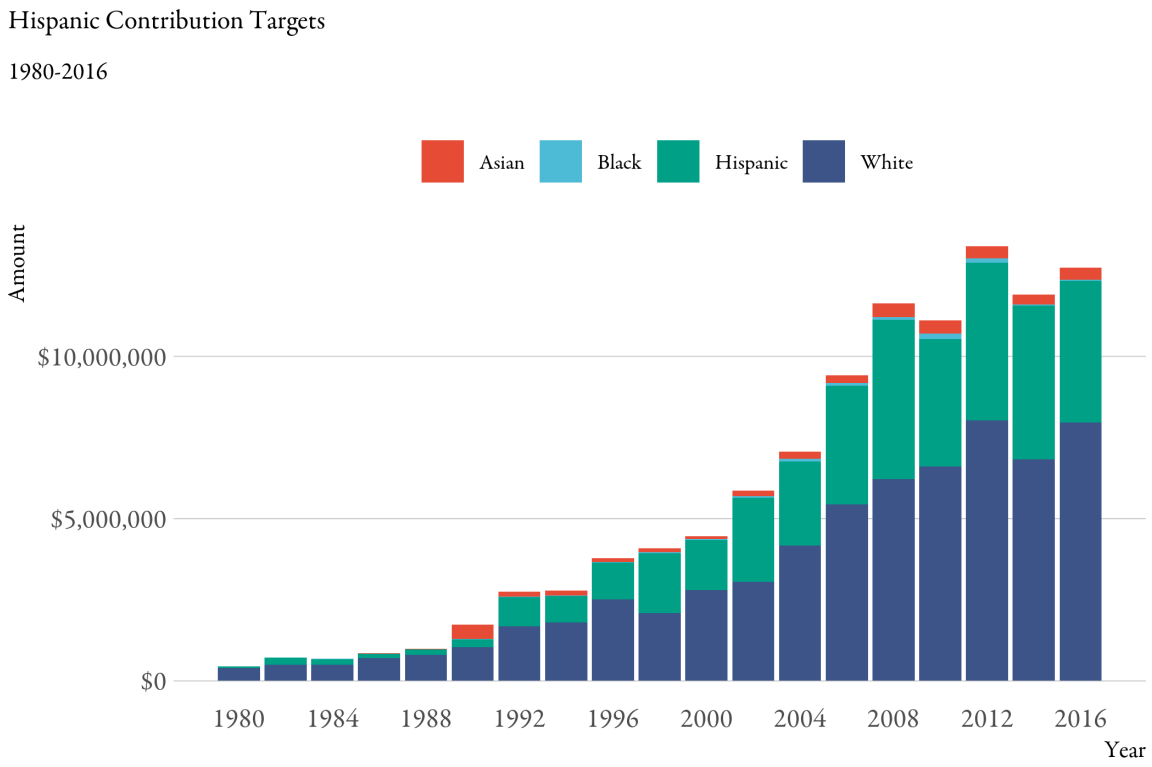
[9]co-racial giving are instances where donors give to candidates of the same race/ethnicity, ie. Asian American Donors to Asian American Candidates



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 2.6: Asian Contributions

2.5, we can see that on average, co-racial contributions make up 18% of contributions by Asian American donors, compared to 30% and 94% for Hispanic and White donors respectively. Similarly, if we look at the total amount of money contributed instead of the number of contributions roughly 22% of the money contributed by Asian candidates went to Asian candidates compared to 36% for Latinos to Latino candidates, and 94% for Whites.



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

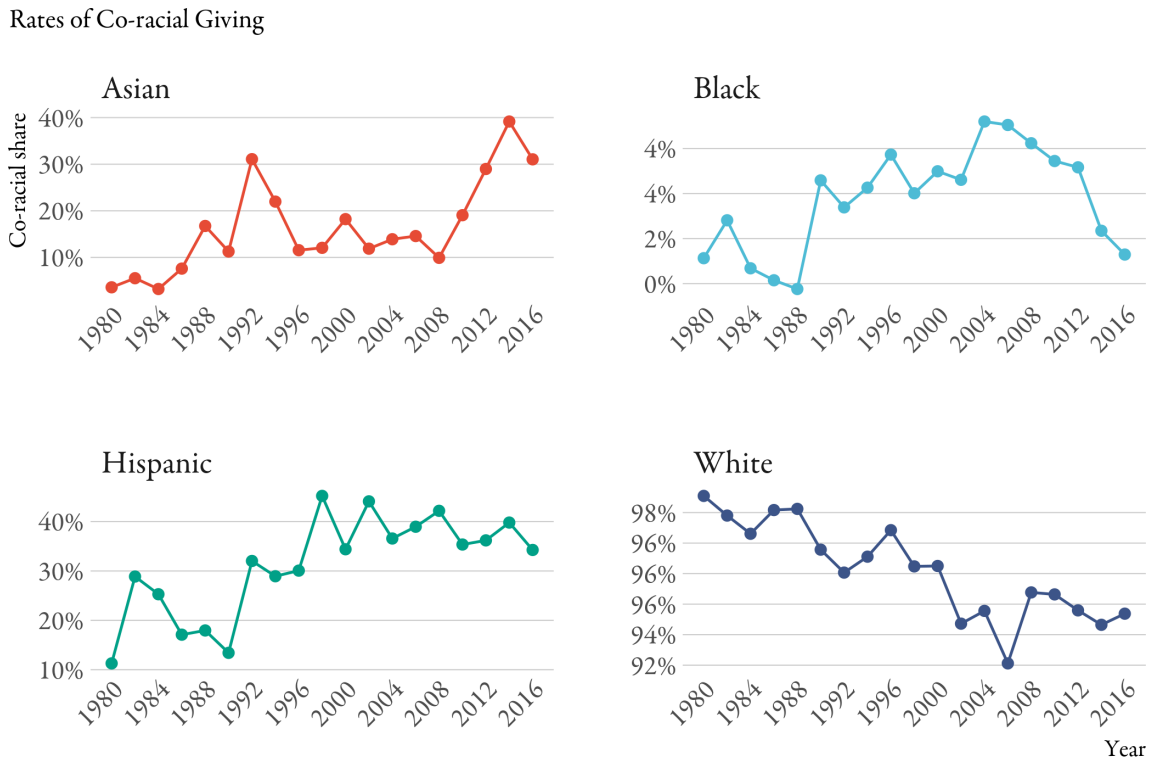
Figure 2.7: Latino Contributions

Table 2.5: Co-Racial Giving (1980-2016)

Race	Contributions	Share of Contributions	Amount	Co-Racial Share of Amount
Asian	37,028	18%	$27,312,798	22%
Black	9,115	4%	$4,486,349	4%
Hispanic	59,144	30%	$38,808,283	36%
White	7,561,694	92%	$3,810,111,638	94%

Source: Augmented DIME Datatset

Figure 2.8 reports the share of co-racial contributions by donor race from 1980 to 2016. This figure tells us several important things. First, the rate of White co-racial giving has remained largely consistent over the past several decades slightly decreasing from nearly 99% in 1980 to 95% in 2016. Second, the rates of both Asian American and Hispanic co-racial giving have dramatically increased over the same time period. Among Asian donors, roughly 4% of the money contributed in 1980 went to Asian American candidates compared to 31% in 2016 a nearly **800% increase**. Similarly, among Latinos the rate of co-racial giving also increased from 11% in 1980 to 34% in 2016, a more than 300% increase.



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 2.8: Rates of Co-Racial Giving

Co-racial giving is useful but does not account for the racial composition of candidates in an election cycle. For instance, White donors have the highest rate of co-racial

giving with nearly 94% of White contributions going to White candidates. Is this an indication that White donors are disproportionately giving to White candidates? Or is this simply a reflection of the fact that Whites represent the overwhelming majority of all congressional candidates?

A simple way to look at this relationship is to evaluate the extent to which the contributions made by Asian donors are distorted relative to the available supply of candidates in an election cycle. I create a ratio of *co-racial representativeness* by dividing the rate of co-racial giving in a given cycle by the share of co-racial candidates running in that cycle.[10] This allows us to evaluate the extent to which co-racial giving is distorted relative to candidate supply, with 1 indicating perfect representation and positive numbers indicating over-representation and negative numbers indicating under-representation. Here, the *ethno-racial identity* hypothesis expects that Asian American and Latino donors will be more likely to donate to candidates with the same race or ethnicity, in part due to a preference for co-racial candidates. When we look at group-level contribution rates this hypothesis suggests that the co-racial representativeness ratio should be greater than 1, indicating an over representation of co-racial candidates relative to their actual size within each election cycle. Similarly, assuming there is no relationship between donor race and candidate race, we should expect contributions from White donors to White candidates to roughly reflect the proportion of White candidates that run in a given cycle, i.e. a ratio close to 1.

Table 2.6 reports the proportion of individual contributions to house candidates from 1980 to 2014 by Asian American and non-Asian groups. After accounting for the number of co-racial candidates in each cycle, Asian donors clearly stand out in terms of their contributions to co-racial candidates. From 1980 to 2014, co-racial

[10]Estimates of the number of candidates running for office in each election cycle are obtained using the same ethnic surname analysis as the donor population.

Table 2.6: Co-Racial Representativeness

Race	Co-Racial Rep (Contribs)	Co-Racial Rep (Amt)
Asian	16	19
Black	2	2
Hispanic	7	9
White	1	1

Source: Augmented DIME Datatset

candidates are over-represented among Asian contributions by a factor of **16**, the largest of any racial group. Similarly, when we look at the actual amount of money contributed to co-racial candidates, this factor increases to **19**. Looking to the other groups, we also see that Latino candidates are over-represented in both the number of contributions (7) and the total amount of money (9) given by Latino donors. Interestingly, these results place the high rate of White co-racial contributions that was reported in Table 2.5 in greater context. After accounting for the composition of congressional candidates in each cycle, it's clear that the high rate of White co-racial contributions is largely a function of the fact that White candidates make up the vast majority of congressional candidates in each cycle rather than a preference for co-racial candidates. However, looking to Asian American and Latino donors, the results are equally clear, with both groups contributing to co-racial candidates at rates well above what the actual supply of these candidates would suggest. In order to evaluate the extent to which these differences are an indication of a preference for co-racial candidates, in the following section I subset the data to each donor's initial contribution and estimate a model for contributions to Asian American and Latino candidates.

Initial Contributions

A donor's first contribution is important for several reasons. First it helps mitigate some of the difficulties from parsing out the effects of donating. Once a donor has been mobilized to give, they are more likely to give simply because they have given before. This makes it difficult to parse out differences in giving in subsequent election cycles. The reason for this is largely due the dynamics of political fundraising in the United States. Once a donor has been mobilized to contribute, their information is recorded by the receiving campaign committee and used for future fundraising. In many cases, once an individual has been *flagged* as a donor, they will typically be approached by other campaigns or institutions such as the party committee or other groups as their information is shared with political allies. In fact, the process of a candidate "renting" out their donor list to data brokers or even other campaigns is somewhat of a cottage industry, with candidates and party organizations spending thousands, if not millions of dollars to acquire the information of potential donors (Evers-Hilstrom and Erickson 2019).

This process poses certain challenges to examining donor behavior. First, after a donor's *initial* contribution the following things change: they will be more likely to give to the same candidate, and they will be more likely to give to other groups. All of these outcomes are related to the **act** of donating and not necessarily the actual **target** of giving. Accordingly, I limit my analyses to each donor's **initial contribution**. An initial contribution helps me account for the challenges mentioned above by eliminating subsequent contribution behavior that is potentially biased, but it also represents an important act of political giving in a donor's contribution timeline, as it is the only contribution from which they move from a **non-donor** to a **donor**. Thus, in many ways the initial contribution made a donor represents the

cleanest signal of their preferences. Subsetting the contribution data to only include initial contributions results in a dataset of 2,516,549 records.

To evaluate the extent to which Asian American and Latino donor decisions fit with the conventional donor hypothesis, I subset the data by donor race and estimate separate OLS regression models where the outcome of interest is the amount of money contributed to the candidate and primary explanatory variable is candidate race (coded as 1 = co-racial, 0 = not co-racial).[11] To account for the conditional effect of shared race on conventional factors, the primary explanatory variable is interacted with measures of incumbency status, ideological proximity and geographic proximity. Here, the ethnoracial identity hypothesis expects that donors will give more money to candidates when they share race or ethnicity, even after accounting for other factors such as incumbency status, ideological and geographic proximity. On the other hand, the *partisan-oriented* and *geographic-oriented* hypotheses expect that donors will give more money to candidates if they are in ideological agreement with each other, the candidate is an incumbent, the district is competitive, and the candidate is running their district.

In the following section I unpack these differences by looking at how the predicted contribution amount varies across different characteristics. Here, I compare the differences in the amount of money donors give to co-racial candidates versus non co-racial candidates while varying incumbency status, geographic proximity, and ideological distance. Recall that the hypotheses of the *conventional donor model* expects that donors will prefer candidates who are running as incumbents, candidates who are ideologically similar to themselves, and candidates who are running in their home district. Thus, we should expect that Asian American donors will give more money to candidates when they hold these characteristics, regardless of whether or not the

[11] For a table of regression results see Table A.2.

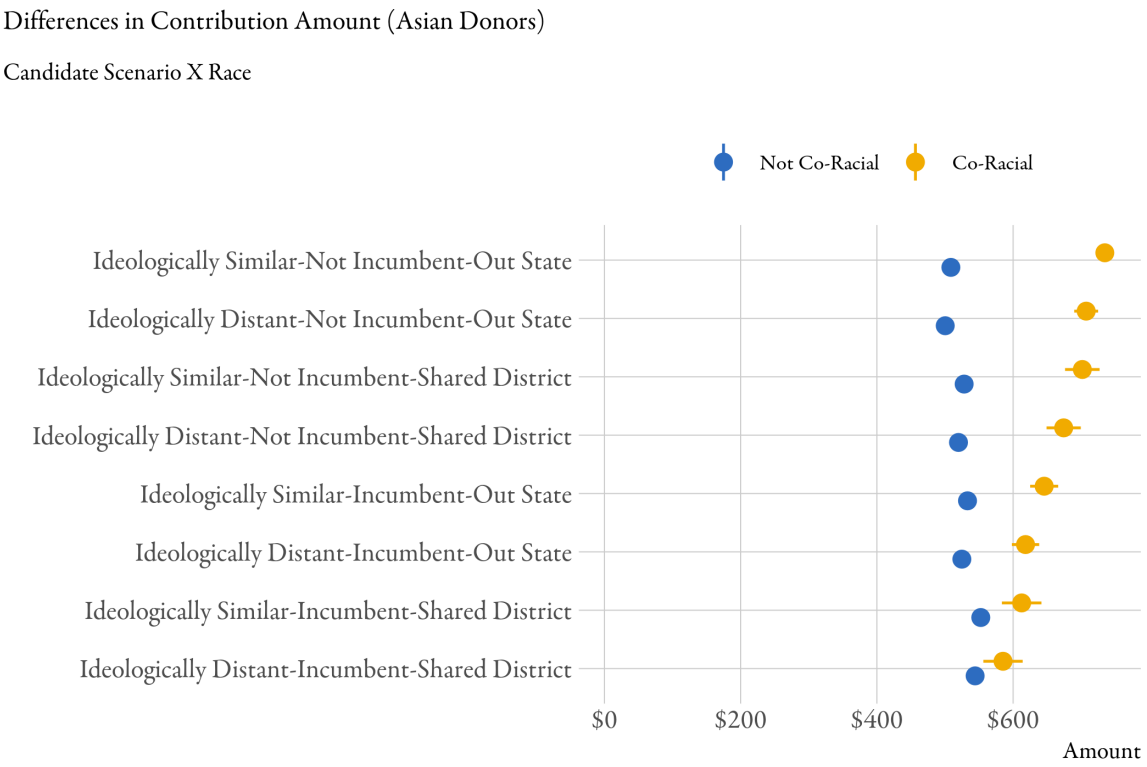
donor shares the race or ethnicity of the candidate. However, if the ethnoracial donor hypothesis is correct, Asian donors may be sensitive to those characteristics, but will consistently give more money to co-racial candidates.

To illustrate these differences, I estimate the predicted amount of money contributed for various different "*candidate scenarios*" based on the candidate characteristics included in each regression model for a co-racial candidate, and a non co-racial candidate.[12] Each scenario is based on different combinations of the three key components of the model: ideological distance, geographic proximity, and incumbency status.[13] Together there are eight different candidate scenarios ranging from candidates who would be considered the *"most attractive"* under the conventional donor hypothesis (ideologically similar incumbents who are running in-district) to candidates with characteristics that should be considerably less desirable (ideologically distant non-incumbents who are running for office in a different state). These eight scenarios allow us to evaluate the extent to which donors prefer a co-racial candidate, and whether the strength or direction of that preference varies across candidate characteristics.

Figure 2.9 shows the predicted contribution amount among Asian American donors with the candidate scenarios sorted from largest to smallest difference between co-racial and non co-racial candidates. Overall, Asian American donors give the largest amount to co-racial candidates who are ideologically similar, not incumbents and running for office in a different state from their own. In fact, in every scenario, Asian American donors give more money to co-racial candidates. Looking at non co-racial

[12]See Table A.2 for full regression results.

[13]To illustrate variation across co-racial giving for each racial group, I estimated predicted contribution amounts at each possible level of each interaction term and held all other variables at their mean values. For terms that take on a numeric value, such as *ideological proximity*, I use the lower and upper quartiles as ideologically-similar and ideologically-distant. To increase the representativeness of these estimates, I *exclude* the minimum and maximum values when calculating the quartiles.



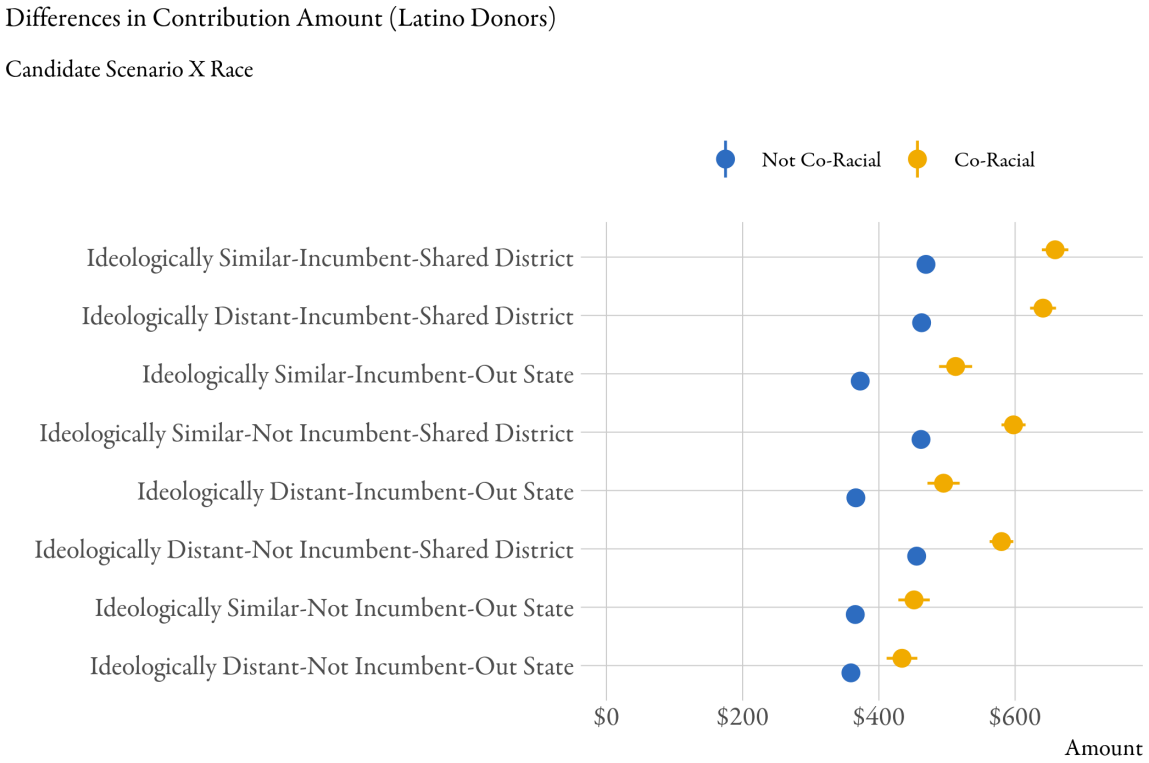
Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 2.9: Predicted Amount of Contribution (Asian Americans)

candidates, Asian American donors give the most amount of money when candidates are ideologically similar incumbents who are running in-district. In other words, the results suggest that Asian American donors are willing to give more money to co-racial candidates regardless of regardless of other candidate characteristics, and they tend to give the most amount of money to co-racial candidates in scenarios that are nearly the exact opposite of what the conventional donor hypothesis expects.

Focusing on the preference for co-racial candidates we can see that the largest gap occurs when a candidate is ideologically similar, not an incumbent, and running in a completely different state. In this scenario, Asian American donors give an estimated $509 to a non co-racial candidate compared to $735 when the candidate shares their race, a $226 increase. Interestingly, this gap remains nearly as large

when looking at candidates who share the same incumbency status and geographic proximity characteristics, but are ideologically distant. Here, Asian American donors give less money to both co-racial and non co-racial candidates, but still give significantly more to Asian American candidates (+ $207). Interestingly, the smallest gap between co-racial candidates and non co-racial candidates occurs in the scenario that the conventional donor hypothesis expects should be the most preferred set of candidate characteristics. Here, Asian American donors are give an estimated $544 to non-Asian candidates compared to $585 to Asian American candidates (a $41 difference). Interestingly, the smallest estimated contribution amount from Asian American donors to a co-racial candidate is still greater than the largest predicted contribution amount for non- Asian American candidates.



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 2.10: Predicted Amount of Contribution (Latinos)

Moving to Figure 2.10 and Latino donors I find similar results, with co-racial candidates receiving significantly more money from Latino donors regardless of incumbency status, ideological proximity, and geographic proximity. However, while Latino donors do appear to prefer co-racial candidates across these scenarios, the strength of this preference appears to be slightly weaker compared to Asian American donors. Similar to Asian donors, Latino donors give more money to co-racial candidates in each scenario. However unlike Asian donors, Latinos give the most to co-racial candidates who are ideologically similar incumbents who are running for office in the same district (aka the "ideal conventional scenario"). In fact, this scenario is also where I find the highest estimated amount of contribution for non-Latino candidates as well. Unlike Asian donors, whose candidate preferences appear to be at odds with the conventional donor model, the results for Latinos is less clear. Specifically, although Latino donors clearly prefer co-racial candidates compared to non-Latino candidates, looking at differences in predicted amounts **within** co-racial and non co-racial candidate types reveal preferences that appear to align with some of the expectations of the *conventional donor hypothesis*.

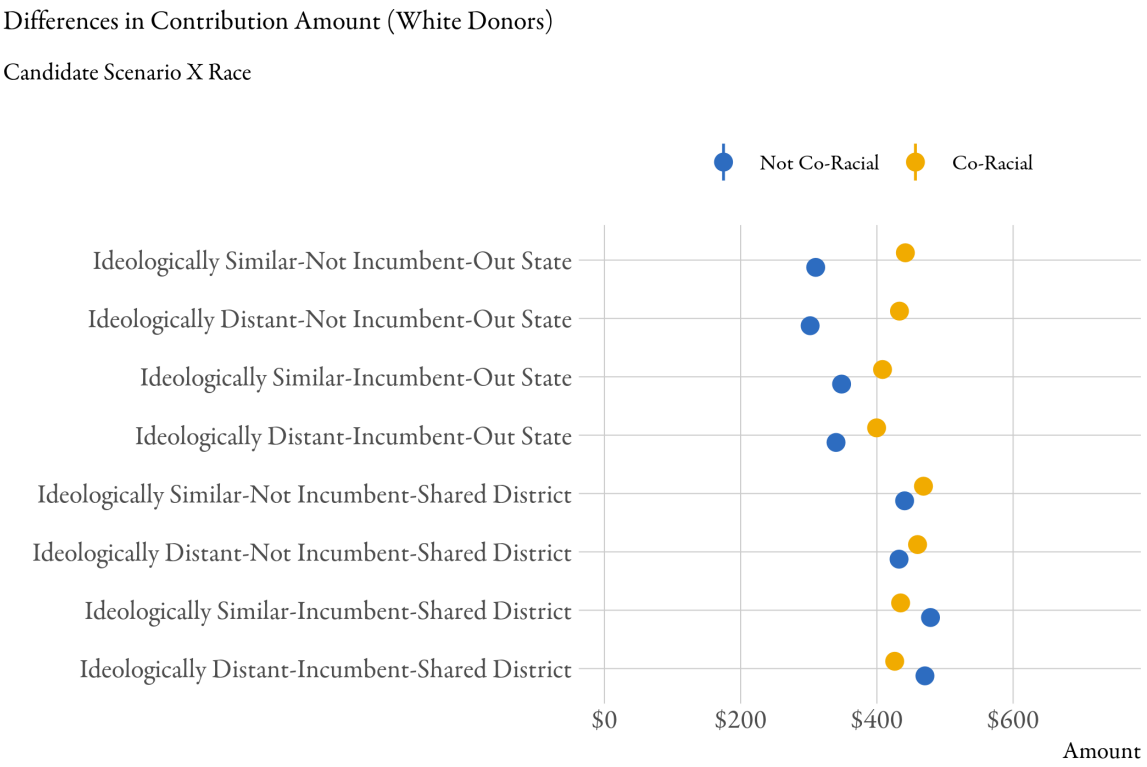
Focusing on the preference for co-racial candidates we can see that the largest gap occurs when a candidate is ideologically similar, an incumbent, and running in the same district. In this scenario, Latino donors give an estimated $469 to a non co-racial candidate compared to $659 when the candidate shares their race, a $190 increase. Interestingly, this gap remains nearly as large when looking at candidates who share the same incumbency and geographic proximity characteristics, but are ideologically distant. Here, Latino donors give less money to both Latino and non-Latino candidates, but still give significantly more to Latino candidates (+ $178). Interestingly, although Latino donors appear to prefer Latino candidates in compared

to non-Latino candidates **within** scenarios, looking across scenarios suggests that this preference may be bounded in certain ways.

Across scenarios, there are two instances where the predicted amount of money to co-racial candidates is greater than the amount for non co-racial candidates, **but less** than the amount predicted amount for non co-racial candidates in other scenarios. Specifically, when we look at ideologically similar, non-incumbent candidates running in a different state, Latino donors give roughly $86 more dollars to a co-racial candidate compared to a non co-racial candidate with the same characteristics. However, this amount is actually less than the $469 dollars that Latino donors are estimated to give to non co-racial candidates when they are ideologically similar incumbents running inside their district. Looking at the other scenario, the results suggests that although Latino donors prefer co-racial non-incumbents running in a different state over non-Latino candidates, their preference for a co-racial candidate may be overridden for a candidate who holds characteristics that are conventionally desirable, **even if that candidate is not Latino.**[14]

Finally, moving to White donors in Figure 2.11, I find several important differences. First, looking across scenarios, the average strength of the co-racial preference is significantly weaker than Asian American and Latino donors. Overall, White donors give about $43 more to co-racial candidates compared to Asian ($133) and Latino donors ($132). Across scenarios, White donors appear to largely align with the *conventional donor hypothesis*, giving the most amount of money to ideologically similar candidates running as incumbents in the same district. Similarly, I find that the predicted amounts decrease as candidates move further away ideologically, are not-incumbents, or are running in a different state. Second, the largest gaps co-

[14]The substantive results entirely hold when controlling for census region, see Table A.3 for regression results.



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 2.11: Predicted Amount of Contribution (Whites)

racial and non co-racial candidates occurs among out of state non-incumbents with White donors giving about $130 more to White candidates compared to non-White candidates.

Finally, although the average difference between the predicted contribution amounts is positive (indicating a preference for co-racial candidates, albeit a slight one), there are two scenarios in which White donors appear to actually **prefer non co-racial candidates**, something not seen in Asian American and Latino donors. Specifically, White donors appear to prefer non co-racial candidates relative to White candidates when they are incumbents, running as incumbents in the same district regardless of ideological proximity, though the difference in dollars is relatively small. Overall, the results indicate that White donors largely fit the conventional donor hypothesis.

Unlike Asian American and Latino donors, I find no consistent pattern indicating a preference among White donors for White candidates. Instead, the contribution decisions of White donors seem to be more sensitive to the set of conventional candidate characteristics.

To summarize, the results suggest two important findings. First, Asian donors have a strong and consistent preference for co-racial candidates, even when that candidate holds characteristics that the conventional donor hypothesis expects should be associated with lower levels of contribution. The preference for co-racial candidates appears to be strongest among Asian donors who consistently give the most amount of money to Asian candidates when looking **within** and **among** candidate scenarios. Second, among Latinos, the results are more nuanced, indicating a strong preference for co-racial candidates within each scenario, but also suggesting that under certain circumstances, this preference may be overridden in favor of a non co-racial candidate holding more conventionally desirable characteristics. Finally, looking to White donors, I find no clear indication of a co-racial preference. Thus, I find support that Asian American and Latino donors fit an **ethnoracial** model of contribution behavior rather than a *conventional model*. Although both Asian American and Latino donors appear to be somewhat sensitive to some of the characteristics that conventional theories of contribution behavior suggest are important for understanding donor decisions, the results clearly indicate that these are secondary considerations.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper sought to evaluate the extent to which Asian Americans and Latinos fit with contemporary theories of campaign contribution behavior through the three major analytical lenses that have been used to study campaign contributors: who do-

nates, what are their motivations, which candidates do they give to. Across these three areas, I find that the theoretical expectations stemming from conventional theories of contribution behavior may not fully extend to Asian Americans and Latinos. First, when considering the question of who donates, conventional theories overwhelmingly point to the role that resources, and specifically income play in explaining who is likely to make political contributions. However, when looking at participation among Asian Americans and Latinos, we see a more complex picture with income and socioeconomic status playing a critical role for explaining participation, but other factors such as racial identity attachment also impacting the likelihood of participation. Second, when looking at the kinds of motivations that donors hold, the results are mixed, but clearly do not conform to what conventional theories would expect. Finally, when we look at the actual behavioral tendencies of donors, the results are clear and unambiguous. Instead of prioritizing factors that relate to a candidate's quality, ideological alignment, or geographic proximity, I find that Asian American and Latino donors prefer co-racial candidates, even when these candidates are ideologically distant from themselves or in another state. Importantly, this relationship looks fundamentally different when looking at the contribution behavior of White donors, where the results indicate sensitivity to ideological distance and a weaker preference for co-racial candidates.

Thus, across each of these approaches, I find that existing explanations for understanding campaign contribution behavior only tell part of the story when applied to Asian American and Latinos. Rather than solely prioritizing characteristics that are rooted in partisan and ideological attachment, donors belonging to these groups hold strong and persistent preferences for candidates with whom they share race or ethnicity. In the following chapter I discuss this co-racial preference among Asian American and Latino donors in relation to scholarship on representation and preferences for co-

racial candidates. I present a novel measure of preferences for co-racial candidates and explore how this measure compares to studies that look at this preference from a vote-centric paradigm.

Chapter 3

Donor Preferences for Co-Racial Representation: Breaking the Mold or More of the Same?

3.1 Introduction

Do ethnic and racial minorities prefer co-racial candidates? Theories of representation posit that citizens prefer representatives who are of the same racial or ethnic background as themselves. The notion that co-racial representatives are preferable, especially for minority populations has been used as justification for measures that are designed to increase the amount of minority legislators elected to office. Empirical evidence for these claims however, are mixed. Scholarship has almost exclusively focused on this question in the context of *voting* behavior and whether racial and ethnic minority voters would prefer to elect a co-racial representative. While some studies find that co-racial preferences exist among minority groups (Barreto, 2007; Schildkraut, 2013; Terkildsen, 1993), others find that co-racial preferences are pri-

marily explained by a combination of partisan, ideological, and policy preferences (Ansolabehere and Fraga, 2016) or may be conditional (Michelson, 2005; Wallace, 2014).

However, the evidence from the previous chapter suggests that when we turn our focus away from *voters* and towards *donors*, I find additional support for a co-racial preference among Asian Americans and Latinos. In this chapter, I seek to address the tension in these findings in three ways. First, I depart from existing approaches by focusing on minority campaign donors, an important yet significantly understudied population. Second, I introduce a novel measure of preferences for co-racial representation by estimating rates of co-racial giving to candidates running for the House of Representatives from 1980-2014. This measure improves upon prior approaches which rely on self-reported data, and other studies that are limited by the number of elections featuring co-ethnic candidates and the availability of voter data. Third, I use this measure to test the bounds of this co-racial preference by evaluating if and how preferences change once donors achieve representation. Fourth, I evaluate the extent to which the co-racial preference is driven by co-ethnic identity attachment or a pan-ethnic attachment.[1]

Preferences for co-racial representation

The lack of clear consensus with respect to whether or not racial and ethnic minorities prefer co-racial representatives is in part due to differences with how scholars have defined the population of interest and measure of preferences for coethnic represen-

[1]For the purposes of this chapter, I use the phrase *co-racial* to refer to situations in which a donor and candidate shares the same racial group (i.e. Asian American donor and Asian American candidate. In addition, I use the phrase *co-ethnic* to refer to scenarios in which donor and candidate are *co-racial* **and** share the same ethnic group background. For example, a Chinese American donor and a Chinese American candidate would be considered *co-racial* **and** *co-ethnic*.

tation. Several studies estimate preferences for co-racial representatives by positing scenarios in which respondents are presented with a hypothetical example such as the one asked in the 2008 National Asian American Survey: "Suppose you have an opportunity to decide on two candidates, one of whom is — American. Would you be more likely to vote for the [respondent ethnicity]-American candidate, if the two candidates are equally experienced and qualified.,"[2] other studies focus on candidate evaluations like job approval (Barreto, 2007; Schildkraut, 2013; Terkildsen, 1993). However, this approach leaves many unanswered questions the relationship with actual political behavior.

The primary challenge with using an experimental framework and self-reported survey measures is one of external validity with respect to the outcome of interest, and the generalizability of the scenario itself. First, it is difficult to evaluate the extent to which we should trust that a self-reported response, such as one indicating a preference for a co-racial candidate, actually translates into real-life behavior.[3] Second, and more generally, the scenario itself might not be realistic, especially for minority respondents who rarely get the opportunity to vote for a co-racial candidate or are rarely in the position to re-elect a co-racial representative. In fact, during the 114th congress, just 8% of the nation's Asian American and 22% of Hispanic population were represented by House members of the same racial or ethnic group (Krogstad, 2015).

Other studies have sought to address external validity problems by studying preferences for co-racial representatives by using measures of *revealed preferences*, most often through looking at vote choice. These studies rely on identifying elections involving minority candidates and use ecological inference to estimate levels of minority

[2]Similarly, respondents in the 2006 Latino National Survey were asked: "People can prefer a candidate for a variety of different reasons. How important is it for you that a candidate is Latino"

[3]For example, a long discussed phenomenon in studies of voter turnout is that self-reported measures typically **overestimates** actual turnout rates(Enamorado and Imai, 2018).

vote choice for minority candidates. Using voting returns from five different mayoral races around the United States, Barreto (2007) finds that across elections, heavily Latino precincts displayed high rates of support for the Latino candidate.[4] Similarly, Sadhwani (2017) finds that when looking at Asian American voting behavior in California. These findings add support for the notion that racial and ethnic minorities prefer co-racial representation but they too, are limited by the fact that the population of minority (and especially Asian) candidates running for office each year is quite small.

Additionally, because these studies measure preferences of co-racial representation through vote choice, they are also limited to studying the population of voters who happen to live in jurisdictions where co-racial candidates have run for office, or currently represent. This approach can be especially problematic given that many minority candidates run in and currently represent district that are majority minority. For example, just 2% of the Asian American population lives in a majority Asian district compared to 20% of Blacks and 34% of Latinos. Thus, studies that seek to explain co-racial preferences through the application of methods like ecological inference may essentially ignore tens of millions of Asian Americans, Latinos, and Blacks.

Studies have largely adopted a voter-centric paradigm

Finally, perhaps one of the contributing factors as to why scholarship has studied preferences for co-racial representatives through the lens of **voting behavior** is that most studies adopt a theoretical framework of *descriptive representation*, which occurs when individuals is represented by someone of shared sociodemographic characteristics (i.e. race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status) *in their own district* (Pitkin,

[4]Similarly, see Barreto, Segura, and Woods, 2004.

1972; Mansbridge, 2003). However, recall from the previous chapter that scholars have continued to develop additional concepts of representation that could be helpful in understanding attitudes and preferences towards representatives, especially among groups that are marginalized or are underrepresented in government like racial and ethnic minorities. For example, Mansbridge (2003) describes *surrogate representation* in which constituents turn to representatives outside their district to speak for their substantive interests. Given the fact that minority representatives are relatively rare and that racial and ethnic populations may be disbursed across the country, studies that seek to understand preferences for co-racial representation should consider how adopting a surrogate representation approach lifts the geographic constraints associated with voting and the traditional concept of descriptive representation.

Taken together, existing approaches to studying preferences for co-racial representation rely on a mix of methodological tools that leave several unanswered questions. In addition, both of these approaches have significant disadvantages, either through the extent to which we can generalize from some studies or the populations that are ignored in others. I find that while White donors donors give the largest share of their contributions to co-racial candidates, this is primarily due to the large amount of White congressional candidates. Controlling for the number of White candidates, this relationship disappears. However, I find that Hispanic and especially Asian donors give significant amounts of money to coethnic candidates even though these candidates represent very small portions of the available candidates running for office. Critically, I find that Asian American and Latino donors are willing continue donating to co-racial candidates, even when they **already have** a descriptive representative. These findings contribute to the ongoing debate of whether racial and ethnic minorities prefer coethnic representatives by expanding the theoretical framework to look beyond the constituent-representative paradigm and provide evidence

that conventional expectations of donor behavior may not be appropriate for minority donors. In the following section I discuss the methodological and theoretical bounds of using voting as a measure of preference for co-racial representation and review how donating offers several important advantages in both areas.

3.2 Measuring preferences for co-racial representation

Although voting and donating are types of political participation, the act of donating offers several important differences compared to voting in the context of studying preferences for co-racial representation. As a concept, voting represents the primary form of participation and civic engagement that citizens will take part in throughout their life. However, if we consider this concept in the context of understanding preferences for co-racial representation, the usefulness is less clear, specifically when we consider challenges with methodology and measurement.

Methodological and measurement differences

First, donor behavior can be **validated** through the use of administrative records at the *individual-level*.[5] As the agency tasked with regulating federal elections in the United States, the Federal Election Commission (FEC) requires any contribution above $200 to be recorded as an *itemized* individual contribution as a matter of public record. Each record reveals information about the donor, the candidate, as well metadata about the contribution itself (i.e. amount, date). Importantly, this record reports not only whether or not a person **participated** in making a political contri-

[5]That is, we can confirm the actual choice made by a campaign donor since it is publicly recorded.

bution, it also reveals the actual **choice** that the donor made (e.g. John Doe gave $200 dollars to a candidate running in his home district). Consequently, contribution records are a standardized source of behavioral data that represent the *ground truth* of donors in the U.S.

In comparison, studies of voting behavior have relied on state voter files to verify participation, but the information that can be gleaned through these records is considerably less. Although voter file records reveal a significant amount of information about a voter, including whether or not they voted in a particular election, the actual vote choice is not recorded.[6] Thus, validation of *vote choice* through actual behavioral data is **impossible**, and studies of voter behavior have primarily relied either self-reported measures of vote choice, responses to hypothetical scenarios.

Other studies have sought to address this problem by using ecological inference to estimate turnout rates among racial and ethnic minority groups (Barreto, 2007; Barreto, Segura, and Woods, 2004). Ecological inference refers to the process of using aggregate-level data to draw conclusions about individual-level behavior (King, 1997; Schuessler, 1999). In this approach, scholars leverage the fact that vote choice is often reported at the precinct-level, and combine those results with voter file estimates of the total number of voters belonging to different ethnic groups within each precinct. However, despite its widespread use in voting research, there are at least four distinct aspects of voting records that make them them a less than ideal tool for measuring preferences for co-racial representation including: their ability to measure *intensity*, the *geographic constraints* associated with voting, and the *"costs"* of voting relative to contributing.

[6]In addition, voter file records are not collected at the national level. Analysis of these records on a national scale either requires the acquisition and standardization of each state's voter file, or purchasing "cleaned" records from a third-party vendor.

First, the act of voting, and specifically *vote choice*, is a binary measure (i.e. did you vote for this person or not?). This becomes problematic when we consider the results of the previous chapter which suggests that the preference for co-racial candidates among Asian American and Latino donors is not necessarily best understood in dichotomous terms. Rather, I find that the **strength (or intensity)** of this preference might vary depending on a variety of other characteristics such as the degree to which Asian American and Latino donors are attached to their racial or ethnic identity, or the extent to which a co-racial candidate shares other characteristics that may also influence donor preferences (i.e. ideological alignment or incumbency status). Contribution records however, offer an important way to measure the intensity of these preferences by using the **amount** and **frequency** of contributions. Here, contribution records allow for a significantly wider range of variation in measuring preferences for co-racial representation.

Second, voting is bound by geographical constraints. When voters actually make their decision as to which candidate they will support, they face an extremely limited set of choices. Voters are limited to choosing between candidates who happen to be running for office in the district in which they reside and typically are limited to just two possible options. This is problematic for several reasons. First as a matter of empirical support, relying on voting records and techniques like ecological inference, requires scholars to identify elections in which minority candidates are actually running for office or up for re-election **and** has a population of minority voters that is sufficiently large to recover reliable estimates of co-racial voting. These requirements severely limit the possible elections in which it is appropriate to use ecological inference techniques, and probably even makes it impossible for it to be applied to Asian Americans given their dispersed population. In addition, voters are further constrained by only having the option of supporting a single candidate per

election. Donors however, are able to contribute to *any number* of the more than hundreds of congressional candidates competing in the 435 congressional districts every two years. In addition, donors are able to contribute more than once.

Finally, we might think that voting is preferable to donating in that it is the act of political participation that most Americans will engage in throughout their life. One of the reasons why rates of donating are relatively small compared to other acts of political participation is the high barrier to entry, specifically having the resources to make a contribution (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman, 1995; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Schlozman, Verba, and Brady, 2012). However, the high cost associated with donating also represents an increased cost for expressions of co-racial support *precisely because* the donor is committing valuable resources to a particular candidate. This cost stands in stark contrast to studies that rely on self-reported survey data present respondents with hypothetical scenarios about preferences for co-racial representation where the respondent faces incurs no tangible costs in giving their response. Similarly, even if we were willing to assume that self-reported measures of vote choice were reliable indicators of real behavior, the cost of donating requires more in the way of resources compared to voting. Thus, any study that that measures preferences for coethnic candidates should consider how the costs of issuing such a preference translated into the real world. In the following section, I review some of the expectations we might expect when using contribution records to measure preferences for co-racial representation.

3.3 Theoretical Expectations

Recall from the previous chapter that Asian Americans and Latinos appear to hold persistent preferences for co-racial candidates. Importantly, this preference appears

to be persistent even after controlling for characteristics thought to be influential for attracting donors. However, this still leaves unanswered questions as to what happens when donors actually have descriptive representation.

One area in which we can look for expectations are studies that consider the "empowering" effect of obtaining descriptive representation can have on Asian American and Latino donors. The empowerment hypothesis posits that political attitudes and engagement might change in the presence of descriptive representatives Bobo and Gilliam, 1990; Gleason and Stout, 2014; Gay, 2001; Michelson, 2005. Specifically, the empowerment hypothesis suggests that minority groups will be more politically engaged and may even participate at higher rates once they have obtained descriptive representation. However, some studies have found that the "boost" in turnout might have diminishing returns. For example, Spence and McClerking (2010) find that "African Americans in cities with long-term Black mayoral control are less likely to engage in a range of political activities compared with those individuals in Black mayoral cities with shorter durations" (pg.923). It is possible that Asian American and Latino donors might react in similar ways once they have the opportunity to support a co-racial candidate in their home district. Here, donors turn to candidates outside their own district due to the fact that many Asian American and Latino donors do not have the opportunity to vote for a co-racial candidate.

Accordingly, we might expect that donors who reside in districts **with** co-racial candidates, might feel "empowered" and more likely to support external co-racial candidates. On the other hand, we might expect that these donors might be less likely willing to support co-racial candidates beyond district lines since they have the opportunity to support a co-racial candidate through their vote or other means. In this scenario, the preference held by Asian American and Latino donors is primarily explained as a desire for *descriptive representation.*

On the other hand, donors belonging to these groups might be thinking about representation in a broader sense either through the desire for *surrogates* (as mentioned in the previous chapter), or something broader. Specifically, the co-racial preference among Asian Americans and Latinos could in part be explained by a desire to see descriptive representation in a *collective* sense (as in congress itself as opposed to their home district). Here, I look to scholarship that moves beyond the dyadic relationship between a constituent and their representative to one that considers the representation of the institution as a whole (Weissberg, 1978). In fact, some studies suggest that citizens actually prefer collective representation as opposed to dyadic representation (Harden and Clark 2016). However, the extent to which these attitudes relate to the strategic decisions donors make, is unclear.

Finally, a related question as to the strength of the co-racial preference among Asian Americans and Latinos is one about group attachment. Here, the preference for co-racial candidates is not so much driven by the attachment to a racial identity, rather it is one to a particular ethnic group identity (Chinese American, or Mexican American for example). Accordingly, theories of **panethnicity** for both Asian Americans (Okamoto, 2003) and Latinos (Stokes-Brown, 2006) suggest that we should not assume uniform adoption of a panethnic identity and that accounting for sub-group variation is important. Studies of both Asian Americans and Latinos find differences along ethnic group lines under a variety of dimensions (Masuoka, 2006; Wong, Ramakrishnan, et al., 2011). Similarly, Lee and Ramakrishnan (2019) find that people's perceptions of who counts as "Asian American" emphasizes east Asian groups (such as Chinese and Korean Americans) as opposed to South Asian groups (Indian and Pakistani Americans), despite the fact that members of those group self-identify as Asian.

Looking to Asian American donors in particular, the extent to which we should expect co-racial (or pan-ethnic) preferences to dominate over preferences for shared ethnicity (or co-ethnic) is unclear. For example, Cho (2002) finds that in addition to preferring co-racial candidates, Asian American donors hold strong preferences for co-ethnic candidates suggesting that Asian American donors might be more interested in expressing solidarity along co-ethnic, rather than pan-ethnic grounds. However, other work by Cho comparing contribution trends between Asian American donors in Hawaii and the mainland United States suggests that co-ethnic preferences may in part be due to the demographic context of where donors reside with donors in Hawaii appearing more likely to contribute along co-racial (or pan-ethnic) lines than those on the mainland (Cho, 2001). Cho's findings suggests that as the United States becomes more diverse, Asian American donors might be more likely to abandon their co-ethnic preferences in favor of co-racial ones.

In terms of Latinos, while we might expect similar variation across ethnic origin groups there is good reason to suggest this might not be the case. Unlike Asian Americans, Latinos are heavily dominated by a single ethnic group, Mexican Americans. Nearly 37 million or (62%) of all Latinos in the United States are Mexican American, vastly outnumbering any other ethnic origin group (Flores, Lopez, and Krogstad, 2019). In fact, the next largest ethnic group, Puerto Ricans, represent less than 10% of the Latino population. To put this in perspective, no single Asian ethnic group represents **more than a quarter** of all Asian Americans. Chinese and Indian Americans each represents around 22% of the Asian American population, with Filipino and Vietnamese Americans each representing more than 10%.[7] In addition, among Latinos, the other ethnic origin groups are largely concentrated in just

[7]Proportions are based on Table B02015 from the American Community Survey's 1-Year Estimates.

a few states. For example, more than 40% of Puerto Ricans live in just two states (New York 21% and Florida 19%), compared to Asian American origin groups, who are broadly distributed throughout the United States. Thus, a major reason why we should reconsider whether or not variation in Latino origin groups exist is primarily one of population diversity.[8] Taken together, these findings leave to several expectations about the bounds of American American and Latino preferences for co-racial candidates moving forward.

- *Descriptive representation hypothesis*: Asian American and Latino donors are more likely to prefer co-racial candidates than White donors, but the strength of this preference will decline once they have the opportunity to support a co-racial candidate in their home district.

- *Surrogate/Collective hypothesis*: Asian American and Latino donors are more likely to prefer co-racial candidates than White donors, even when they have the opportunity to support a co-racial candidate in their home district.

- *Co-ethnic preference hypothesis*: Asian American donors' hold preferences for co-racial candidates but these are in addition to preferences for co-ethnic candidates.

3.4 Data & Methods

In order to evaluate these expectations I return to the augmented dataset of campaign contribution records described in the previous chapter. I make the following additional

[8]In addition, unlike Asian Americans, there does not appear to be any prior studies that suggest a co-ethnic preference among Latino donors within the context of donating. However, future work may be able to overcome the lack of ethnic diversity within this group by leveraging variation in sub-national contributions, such as mayoral or state legislature races.

Table 3.1: Share of Donors with descriptive candidates (1980-2016)

Race	Share of Donors with Descriptive Candidate (mean)
Asian	18%
Black	20%
Latino	42%
White	96%

Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

augmentations to the dataset to answer these questions. First, I create an indicator for each contribution record of whether or not that contribution was made by a donor that has a co-racial candidate that is running for election in their home district. Second, I estimate the detailed Asian origin for the six largest Asian American ethnic groups (Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino, Japanese, and Indian) using a list of Asian detailed origin surnames (Lauderdale and Kestenbaum, 2000). I include the same set of controls used in the previous chapter: ideological proximity, district partisanship, candidate race, incumbency status, donor race, and amount contributed. In the following section I take a descriptive view of some of the variation among minority candidates and co-racial donors over the past several decades.

Descriptive Findings

Thinking about the prevalence of minority candidates running for office, it is useful to examine general rates of descriptive representation over time. Table 3.1 reports the overall percentage of donors by racial group whose home districts feature at least 1 co-racial candidate running for for election. Not surprisingly, White donors are the most likely to have descriptive candidates running in their own district (96%) while the majority of Latinos, Blacks, and Asians are likely to reside in districts without any co-racial candidates.

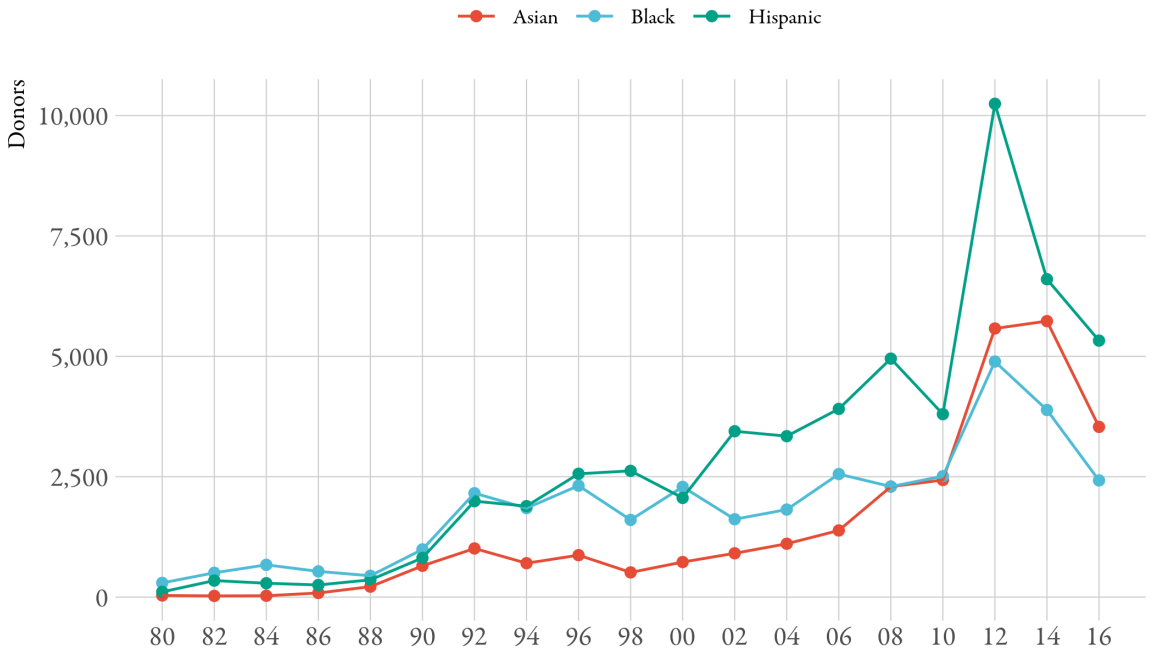
However, looking across this time period reveals much more variation among racial and ethnic minority donors in particular. Figure 3.1, reports the total number of Asian American, Latino and Black donors in each election cycle with in-district descriptive candidates. Here, we can see a steady upward trend across all groups, with some of the largest increasing coming in 2010 for Latinos in particular. In 2000, roughly 12% of Asian American donors, and 38% of Latino donors were able to contribute to an in-district descriptive candidate, and just twelve years later, this number doubled with 29%. Interestingly, we see spikes in growth across each group in 2012, with the largest increase seen in Latino donors with descriptive candidates reaching more than 10,000. It is unclear why exactly 2012 saw such a sudden increase, however the fast growth rate of the Latino and Asian American population during this same time period could play a role.

Asian American donors

Beginning with Asian American donors, Figure 3.2 reports the variation in the overall share of Asian American donors who have descriptive candidates. Here, Asian Americans donors are characterized by the substantially lower rates of descriptive representation amongst candidates, with just roughly 1 in 10 (10%) Asian American donors having co-racial candidates running in their home congressional districts in 1980. Interestingly, we see several high points in subsequent years such as 1990, where as many as 1 in 4 Asian American donors had the opportunity to contribute to a co-racial candidate in their home district.

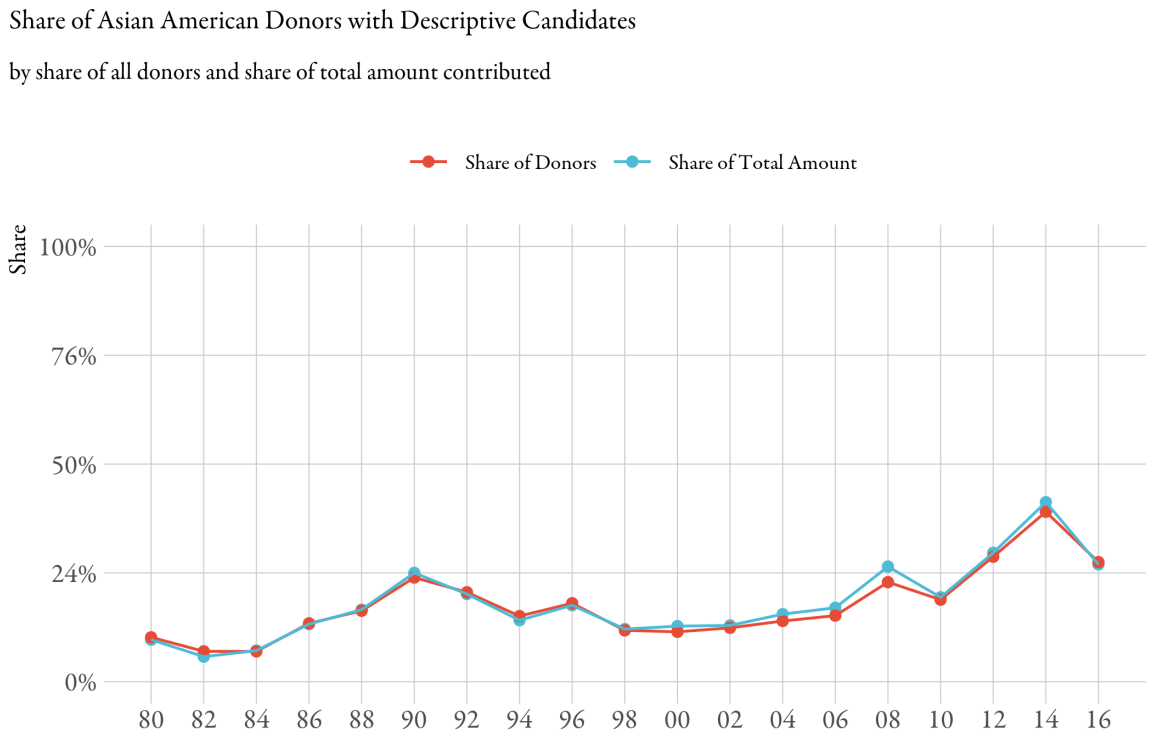
Similarly, beginning in 2010, there is a slight upward trend reaching the highest overall point in 2014, where nearly 40% of all Asian American donors had descriptive candidates. Another way to look at this variation is by the total amount donated by

Growth in Minority donors with Descriptive Candidates



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 3.1: Donors with Descriptive Candidates



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

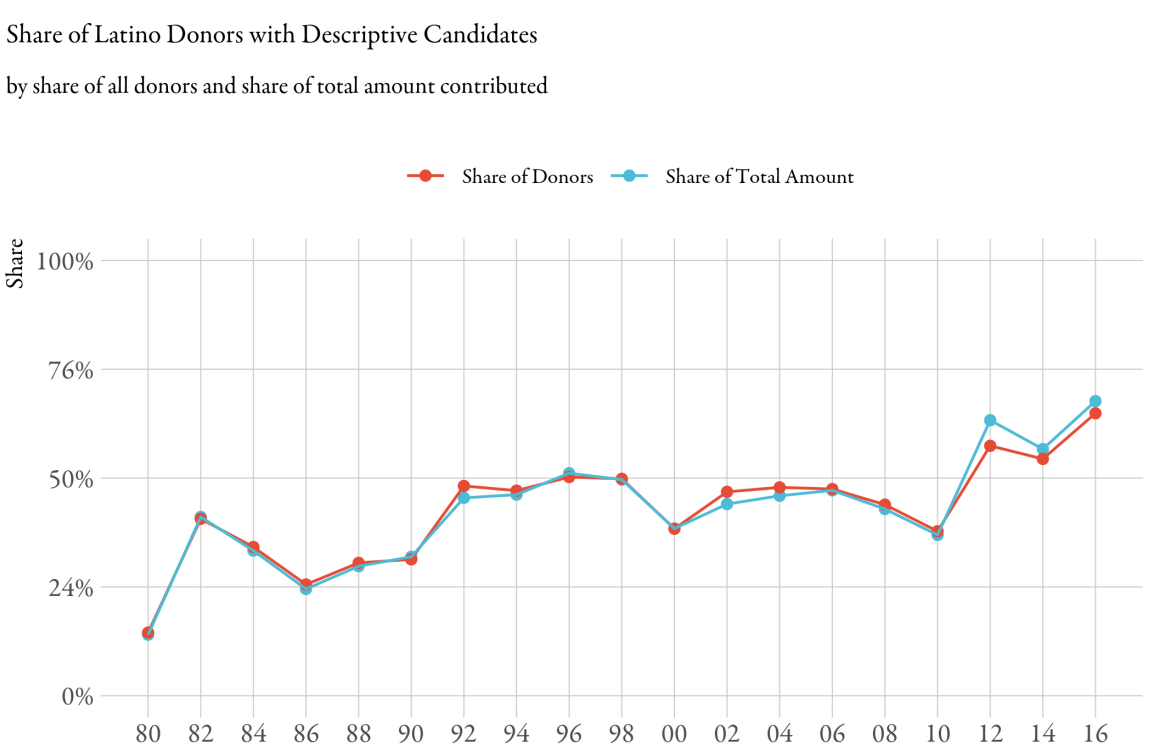
Figure 3.2: Asian American Donors With Descriptive Candidates

Asian American donors who have descriptive candidates. For the most part, the trend is largely similar with Asian American donors with descriptive candidates representing slightly larger shares of all contributions made in most years. Thus, when we consider Asian American donors and the relationship between descriptive candidates during this time period, it is one in which **most** Asian American donors must look beyond their their home districts in order to support co-racial candidates.

Latino Donors

Next, turning to Latinos, the most striking differences are with respect to size with a significantly larger share of Latino donors living in districts with Latino candidates. On average, donors in these areas represent 43% of all Latino donors as well as all of the money Latinos contributed in a given election cycle. In Figure 3.3, we can see a dramatic increase in the share of donors with descriptive candidates, starting with just 14% of all Latino donors and contributions in 1980 to roughly two-thirds of both in 2016.[9] Similar to the trend seen with Asian American donors, we see a slight drop off from the 2008 to 2010 election cycle, but a steady increase from 2010 onward in subsequent elections.

[9]In 2016, Latinos with descriptive candidates represented 64.9% of all Latino donors and 67.6% of all of the money Latinos donated to House candidates.



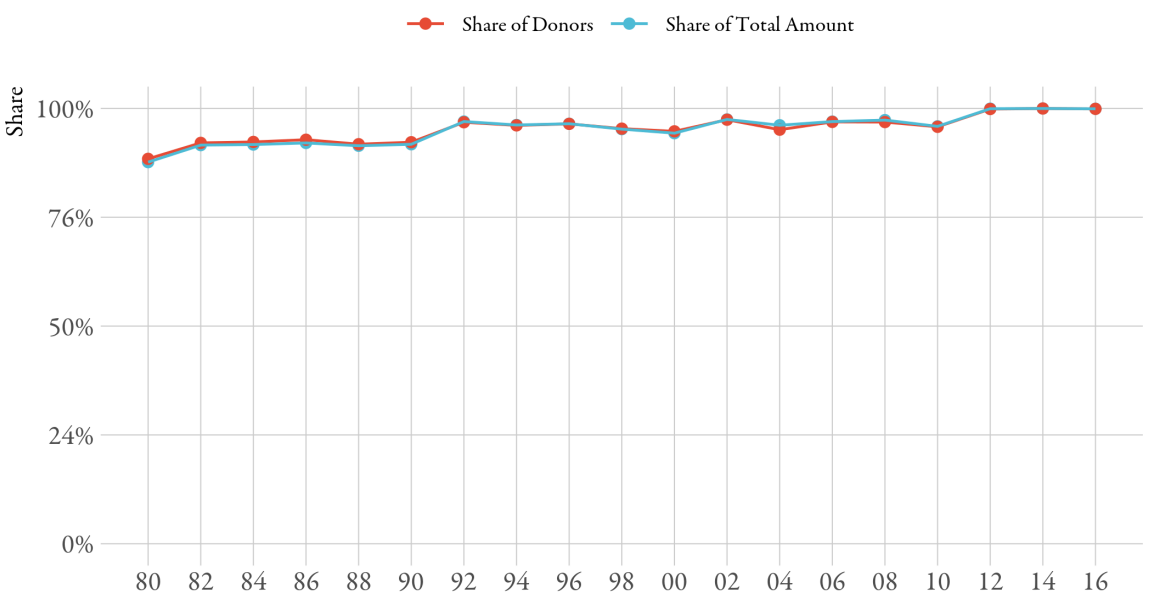
Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 3.3: Latino Donors With Descriptive Candidates

When looking at variation in the share of the total amount of money contributed by Latino donors, the relationship looks largely similar with some slight deviations such as in 2012, where donors with descriptive candidates represented 57% of all Latino donors but more than 63% of the money Latinos contributed to candidates. Taken together, the findings suggest Latino donors live and make strategic decisions in a substantially different electoral context than Asian American donors and one that largely tracks with the overall growth rates of both populations. Over the past several decades, Latino donors have gone from a group where most must *look outside* their own districts for co-racial candidates to support, to one in which more than **3 in 5** have the opportunity to support a co-racial candidate in their own district.

White Donors

Finally, when we look at White donors, the differences with Asian Americans and Latinos could not be more stark. Across the same time period, the overwhelming majority of White donors have had descriptive candidates in their home district, with this group representing more than 95% of all White donors as well as 95% of all of the money White donors have contributed to House candidates. The lack of variation among White donors is not surprising given their relatively flat population growth rate as compared to Asian Americans and Latinos (Flores, Lopez, and Krogstad, 2019). Thus, the electoral context for White donors has remained the same over the past several decades with respect to the share of donors who have the opportunity to support in-district co-racial candidates. These differences suggest that for White donors, the need to look beyond district lines to support a racially descriptive candidate rarely occurs.



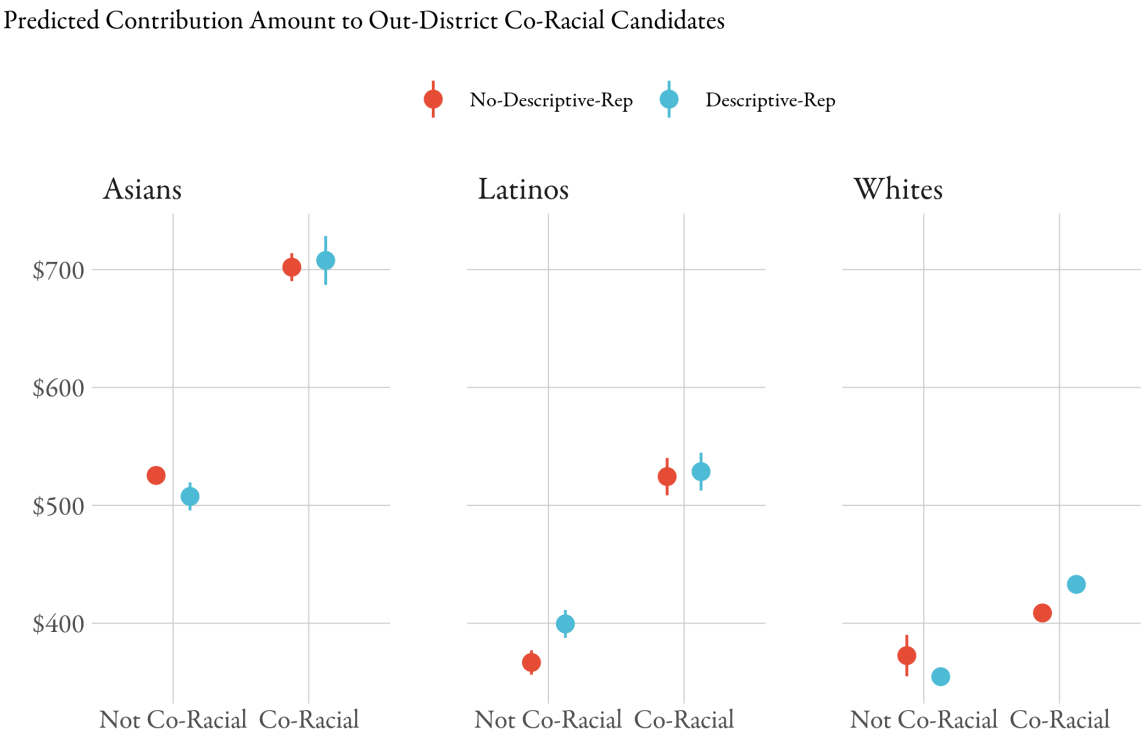
Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 3.4: White Donors With Descriptive Candidates

Findings

In order to evaluate the extent to which the empowerment hypothesis can explain the bounds of co-racial preferences, I estimate a series of OLS regression models where the outcome of interest is the amount of money contributed to candidates. In the first model the main explanatory variables include donor race, a dichotomous variable indicating whether or not the candidate is co-racial, and a dummy indicator indicating whether or not the donor has the opportunity to give to an in-district co-racial candidate. In the second model, I subset the contributions to only look at contributions to **out-district** candidates. Focusing on out-district candidates is critical to unpacking the extent to which Asian American and Latino donors' co-racial preference **remain** even when they have the opportunity to give to descriptive candidates.

The results of the models are reported in Figure A.4, but for the sake of interpretability, I estimate predicted contribution amounts at various levels of the key explanatory variables, holding all other variables at their representative values. Figure 3.5 reports the predicted amount of money contributed to **out-district** co-racial candidates. Beginning with Asian Americans donors, we see that even after controlling for whether or not co-racial candidates are running in their home district, Asian American donors give more money to co-racial candidates compared to non co-racial candidates. Interestingly, while Asian Americans donors prefer co-racial candidates in both situations, they appear to favor external co-racial candidates over external non co-racial candidates slightly **more** (+$200) when they have descriptive in-district candidates as compared to not (+$177). However, when we compare estimated contribution amounts to external co-racial candidates between donors who have an in-district co-racial candidates and those who do not, there doesn't appear to



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 3.5: Predicted Amount of Contribution

be a meaningful difference. The results indicate that Asian American donors preference for co-racial candidates *is not sensitive* to the presence of an in-district co-racial candidate, and thus supports the *Surrogate/Collective hypothesis*.

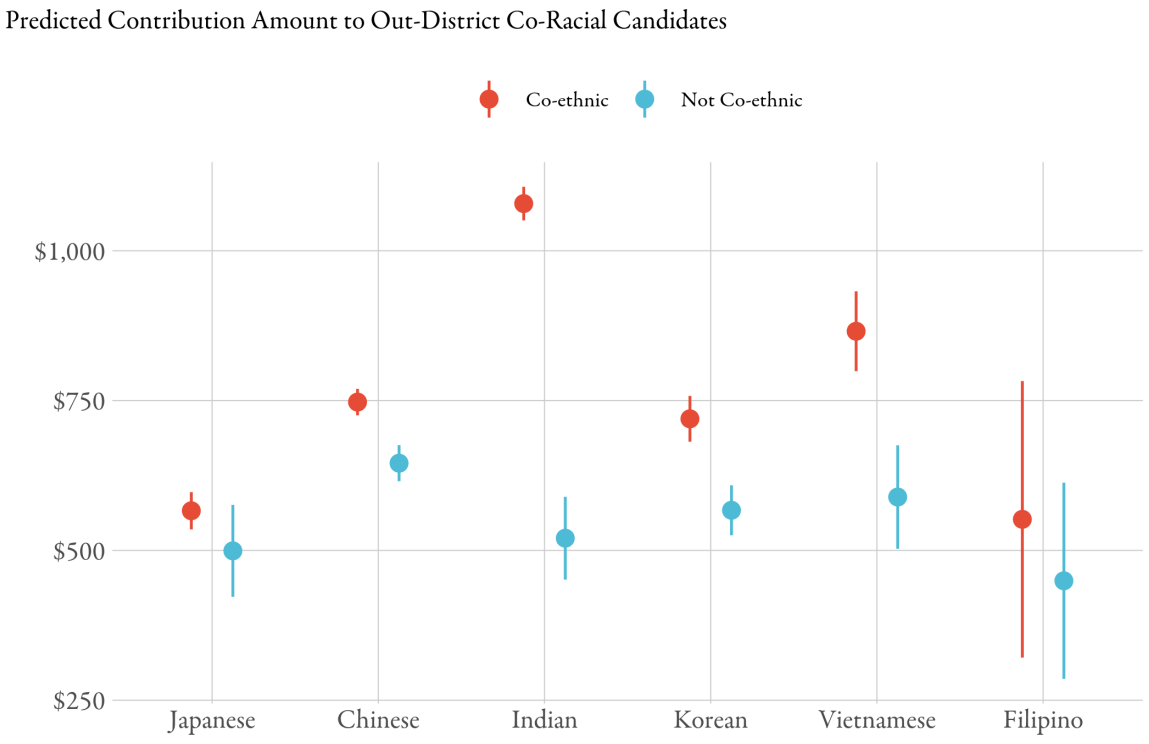
Moving to Latino donors, the results look largely similar. When looking at the difference between co-racial and non co-racial candidates Latinos give significantly more money to Latino candidates. Specifically, when donors lack the opportunity to give to co-racial candidates **in-district**, they give $158 dollars more to co-racial candidates compared to non co-racial candidates. However, when Latino donors are in the position to give to a potential in-district Latino candidate, their preference for co-racial candidates remains, although slightly weaker (+$129). Moving to differences between donors with and without in-district co-racial candidates, the results are

similar to Asian Americans. The preference for co-racial candidates does not appear to vary with the presence of co-racial candidates, also suggesting that Latino donors underlying preferences may not be driven by a desire for *descriptive representation*, but rather for *surrogate or collective representation.*

Finally, when looking at White donors, the results are substantially weaker and if anything, suggest that race plays a very minor factor in the contribution decisions compared to Asian American and Latino donors. White donors appear to give only slightly more money to out-district White candidates when they have the opportunity to give to White candidates inside their own ($433 compared to $409), which is well below the predicted increase given to co-racial candidates among Asian American and Latino donors.

Finally, to evaluate the extent to which Asian American co-racial motivations are driven by an underlying preference for *co-ethnic* representatives, I subset the contributions records to Asian American candidates, and run the same model for Asian ethnic origin groups.[10] Figure 3.6 reports the predicted amount of contribution by ethnic origin group for Asian American donors. Here, we see that Indian, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese donors give more money to co-ethnic candidates than to Asian American candidates belonging to another ethnic group. Similarly, Japanese and Filipino candidates also appear to favor co-ethnic candidates, but the difference in amount does not appear to be significant. Interestingly, across all ethnic groups, Indian donors appear to favor co-ethnic candidates the most, giving co-ethnic candidates a predicted $1079 dollars compared to $520 dollars for Asian American candidates belonging to another ethnic group (+$558). The preference for co-ethnic candidates is considerably weaker for the other ethnic groups, with Vietnamese donors favoring

[10]See Table A.5 for regression results.



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 3.6: Predicted Amount of Contribution (Asian Americans)

co-ethnic candidates the second most (+$277), followed by Korean ($+153), Chinese ($+102), Filipinos ($+103), and Japanese donors (+$67).

Taken together, the results from the ethnic group model suggest that for some groups of Asian American donors, their preference for co-racial candidates is *in part* driven by a desire for a candidate who shares the same *ethnic group*. Specifically, I find that the contribution decisions by Indian and Vietnamese donors, and to a lesser extent Chinese and Korean donors support the *co-ethnic preference hypothesis*.

3.5 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter sought to evaluate the extent to which Asian Americans and Latino donors prefer co-racial representation. In contrast with prior scholarship which focuses on these groups from a voter-centric paradigm, I turn to the small, but influential group of Asian Americans and Latinos who make political contributions. By focusing on donors instead of voters, I am able to evaluate the intensity of co-racial preferences which was not possible with other forms of participation.

I find that Asian American and Latino donors preferences for co-racial candidates cannot be explained by a desire for descriptive representation. Indeed, even when given the opportunity to contribute money to an in-district co-racial candidate, Asian American and Latino donors are still willing to support co-racial candidates with home they have no electoral relationship with. These results suggest that the preference for co-racial candidates among these donors may be better explained by a pursuit of representation at a surrogate or collective level. In addition, I find that with certain groups of Asian American donors, their preference for a co-racial candidate is in part one for a co-ethnic candidate.

One area that requires further analysis is the extent to which we might expect other factors that may also interact with co-racial preferences for candidates among Asian American and Latino donors. In particular, it is unclear the extent to which differences in preferences along gender lines exist among Asian American and Latino donors and if so, how do they interact with co-racial and co-ethnic preferences. As I describe in the concluding chapter of this dissertation, future work will leverage new techniques to produce reliable estimates of donor gender and allow for the analysis of donor preferences that consider the intersection of race and gender.

Chapter 4

Minority Candidate Donor Networks

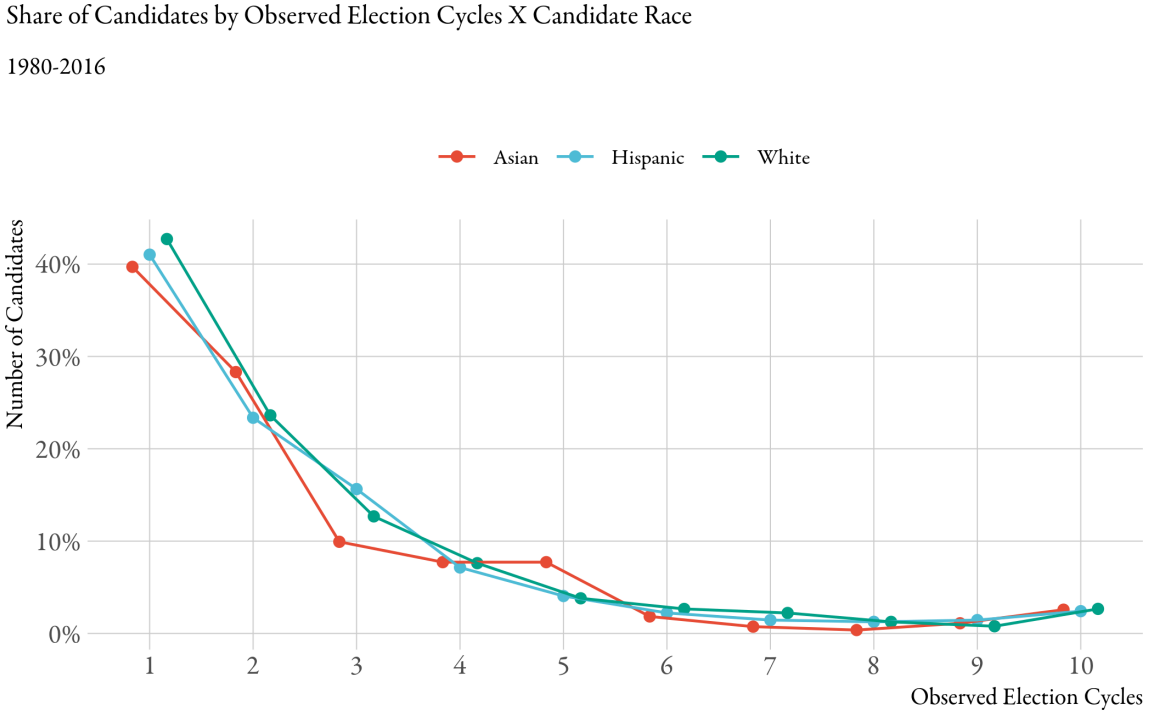
4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters I have focused on how the strategic decisions made by Asian American and Latinos are fundamentally different compared to the decisions made by White donors. I find that unlike conventional theories of donating, donors belonging to these groups appear to prioritize certain candidate characteristics, such as race and ethnicity. However, we still know relatively little about how these differences influence the careers of minority candidates. On one hand, the previous chapters suggest that minority candidates may actually benefit in their ability to raise funds from co-racial donors. On the other hand, candidates belonging to certain groups such as Asian Americans and Latinos are still vastly underrepresented in Congress relative to their share of the population. Do Asian Americans and Latinos actually rely on co-racial donors? Does their reliance on these donors serve as a critical signal of their viability? Or as a signal of their inability to build a winning coalition?

In this chapter I switch the population of interest by taking a *candidate-centric* approach. Specifically, I answer several important questions related to minority candidates and their contribution networks. Using administrative contribution records I outline the major characteristics between the donor networks of Asian American and Latino candidates. I find that for candidates belonging to these groups, co-racial contributions represent a critical source of support that for most candidates, remains throughout their careers. In particular, I find that Asian American and Latino candidates have the biggest advantage in collecting co-racial contributions from *outside the state* in which they are running for office. The results suggest that Asian American and Latino candidates have better success fundraising from co-racial donors with whom they have no electoral relationship compared to White candidates.

4.2 Asian American and Latino donor networks over time

Recall from the previous chapters that scholarship on minority candidates have seldom addressed how and why their donor networks might be different than candidates belonging to other racial groups. With the rapid growth of the number of Asian American and Latino candidates and donors over the past several decades, it is important to take a descriptive look at the characteristics of donor networks observed over this time period. In the following section, I review how the racial composition of these donor networks have changed over time as well as discuss how the relative size of Asian American and Latino donors influences the extent to which candidates "rely" on co-racial donors.



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 4.1: Share of Candidates by Observed Cycles

First, I take consider the composition of each candidate race, by the number of election cycles we observe them in the dataset.[1] This gives us a sense of how many candidates end up winning office and subsequent re-elections. Here, we see similar results across racial groups. Figure 4.1 reports the share of each candidate race by the number of election cycles that we observe (or active cycles) in the collected data. For example, about 39% of Asian American candidates during this time period were only observed for a single election cycle compared to about 42% of Whites, and 41% of Latinos. Similarly, looking to the share of candidates observed for 10 or more election cycles during this time period, we see Asians (2.5%), Latinos (2.4%), and Whites (2.6%) all with similar proportions. The large share of one-cycle candidates

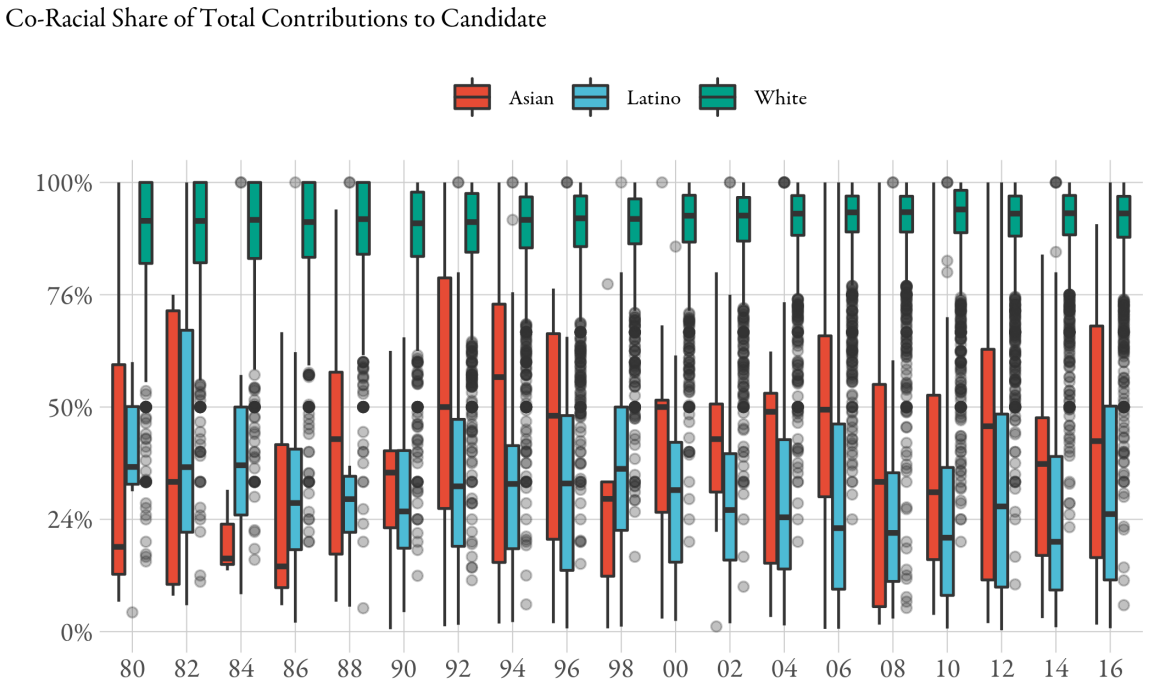
[1]Because the DIME dataset covers 1980-2016, this means that candidates who were elected or ran prior to 1980 will be coded as having been observed in 1 election cycle.

is not surprising, given that most will ultimately fail to be competitive and win their primary election, let alone the general.

4.3 Co-Racial Donor Composition

The previous chapters have suggested that Asian American and Latino donors prefer co-racial candidates. Thus, we should expect to see co-racial contributions representing a significant proportion of the donor networks of Asian American and Latino candidates. In order to evaluate the extent to which minority candidates rely on co-racial donors, I estimate the percentage of contributions that come from co-racial donors for each candidate in a given election cycle and group them by racial group. In addition, I measure the co-racial share in three different ways: percent of total contributions, percent of total amount contributed, and percent of unique donors. Estimating the co-racial share in three different ways is important because it allows for differentiating between a candidate who raises a lot of money from a few wealthy co-racial donors (i.e. a high co-racial share in terms of amount contributed), versus one who raises much smaller amounts of money, but from a larger number of unique donors (i.e. a high co-racial share in terms of unique donors). Similarly, we can think of situations in which a candidate has an over-representation of the total *amount of money* or *frequency of contributions* as a measure of **intensity**, as opposed to broad appeal to co-racial donors, which is better captured by looking at the share of *unique donors*.

Figure 4.2 reports the distribution of candidates by the extent to which their contributions come from co-racial donors. Across the time period, the average White candidate collects 89% of their contributions from White donors, compared to 40% for Asian American candidates, and 32% for Latino candidates. In addition, White can-



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 4.2: Co-Racial Share of Total Amount Contributed to Candidate

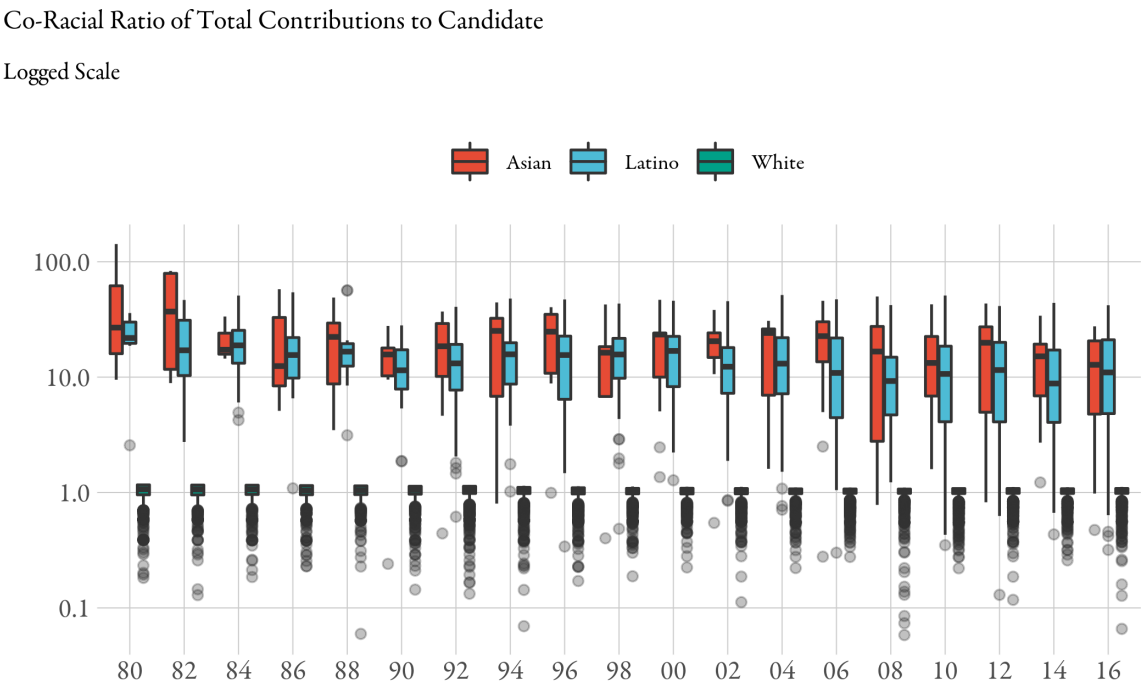
didates have much less variation in the co-racial share of their contributions, whereas as Asian Americans and Latinos see much more variation from cycle to cycle. Among Asian Americans, the range is quite large with the average candidate collecting 20% of their contributions from co-racial donors in 1984 to more than half in 1992. Among Latino candidates the variation is considerably smaller, ranging from 27% in 2008 to nearly 45% in 1982.

At first glance, the estimates suggest that White candidates are much more likely to rely on co-racial donors than other groups, however, this distribution does not take into consideration the available **supply** of co-racial contributions in a given cycle. If we take into account the relative co-racial supply of donors (in terms of contributions, amount contributed, and number of unique donors), we can see clear differences among Asian Americans and Latinos compared to Whites and their reliance

on co-racial donors. For example, in 2010, Congresswomen Judy Chu received 1,937 individual contributions, **63%** (1,230) of which came from Asian American donors, despite the fact that of the 954,839 individual contributions made to House candidates in 2010, **just 2%** (or 22,325) of them were made by Asian American donors. Similarly, in the same year, Republican congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart (FL-21) received 284 individual contributions, 45% of which came from Latinos which is significantly higher than the 2% share of all contributions Latinos made in 2010. In other words, for both Chu and Diaz-Balart, co-racial contributions were vastly **over-represented** in each of their contribution records relative to the actual share of Asian American and Latino contributions made during this time period. As a point of comparison, Republican congressman Kevin McCarthy (CA-21) received 90% of his contributions from White donors in 2010 which is essentially identical to the share contributions that White donors made across the entire election cycle.

In order to better illustrate the differences between these groups, I create a ratio of co-racial representation for each candidate in an election cycle, where I divide the share of co-racial contributions (measured in contributions, total amount contributed, and number of unique donors) by the total amount of co-racial contributions made in the entire election cycle. Thus, when co-racial donors are **over-represented** in the contribution network's of a particular candidate their ratio will take on a value greater than 1. Similarly, the closer a candidate's ratio is to 1, the more their donor network is representative of the co-racial share for the election cycle as a whole.

Using this measure essentially normalizes the co-racial share for each candidate by taking into account the relative number of each racial group's donors within an election cycle. This allows for a more direct comparison of the co-racial share between candidate racial groups. Figure 4.3 reports the same data as in the previous figure, but uses the ratio instead of the absolute share of contributions for each candidate.

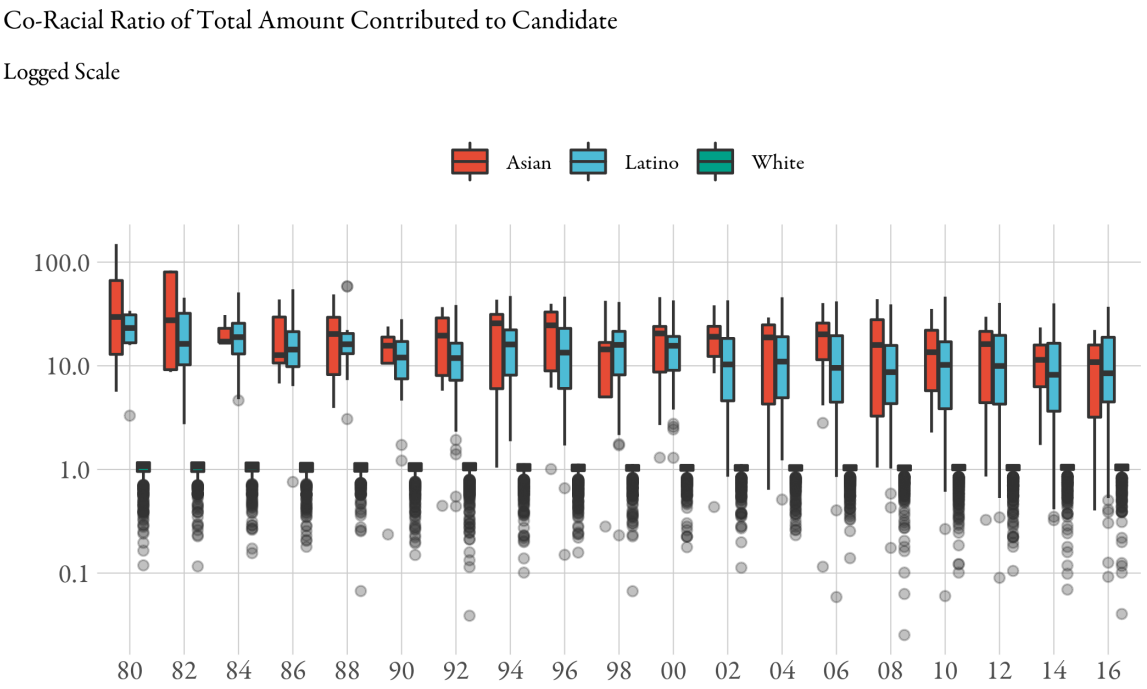


Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 4.3: Co-Racial Ratio of Total Contributions to Candidate

Here, we can see that after taking into account the fact that Asian Americans and Latinos represent significantly smaller proportions of all contributions made in each cycle, they are overwhelmingly *over-represented* in the contribution networks of Asian American and Latino candidates.

This pattern also holds when we look at the co-racial share of the total amount contributed to each candidate. Among Asian Americans, the average candidate during this time period received 39% of their individual contributions from co-racial donors. These donors were over-represented in the donor networks of Asian American candidates by a ratio of more than 20. Similarly, about a third of the money raised by Latino candidates among individuals was from co-racial donors (over-represented by a factor of 15). Finally, among White candidates the results are nearly the opposite. Whereas Asian American and Latino candidates heavily rely on co-racial donors



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 4.4: Co-Racial Ratio of Total Amount Contributed to Candidate

for campaign funds, White candidates do not appear to rely on White donors any more than the actual share of White donors in a given election cycle would suggest. During the same time period, the average ratio of co-racial representation for White candidates is 1.01, indicating a near exact reflection of share of White donors as a whole.

Finally, when looking at the co-racial share of unique donors by candidate race (Figure 4.4), we see the same pattern of over-representation of co-racial donors among Asian American and Latino candidates, although to a slightly lesser extent than the other dimensions. For example, although the average co-racial share (39%) and ratio (19) of unique donors for Asian American candidates nearly identical to the other dimensions when looking at the entire time period, we see slightly less lower of over-representation in each election cycle. Similarly, among Latino candidates, the over-

all co-racial representation among unique donors aligns contributions and the total amount whether looking at the absolute share (33%) or ratio (15). Finally for White candidates, in line with the other dimensions, the share of co-racial representation among unique donors are nearly identical.

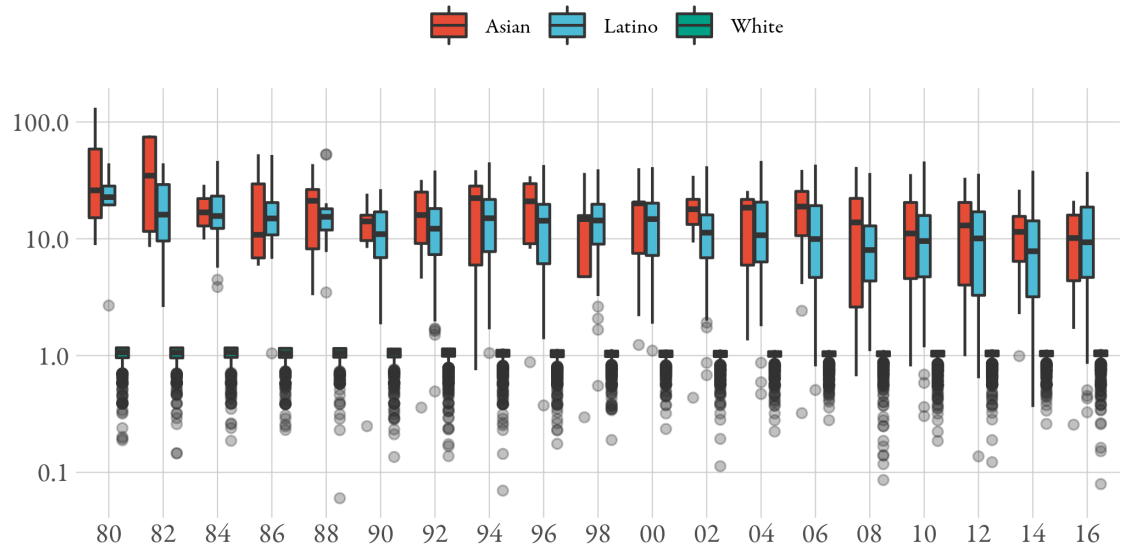
The slightly lower levels of over-representation for Asian Americans and Latinos is not surprising, since the the co-racial share of unique donors is the measure that would be most sensitive to the actual size of Asian American and Latino donors in each cycle. However, the fact that we see greater levels of over-representation when looking at contributions and contribution amount is an indication that candidates belonging to these groups not only rely on co-racial donors, but that when these donors give, the appear to give more frequently and in greater amounts than compared to White donors.

Taken together, these trends tell us two important things. First, across the entire time period, the donor networks of Asian American and Latino candidates can be characterized by the consistent over-representation or heavy reliance on co-racial donors. Second, the slightly higher levels of co-racial representation seen in Asian American and Latino candidates donor networks that we see when looking at dimensions that capture intensity suggest that candidates belonging to these groups may benefit not only in terms of their ability to get support from co-racial donors, but that when they do receive support, it is more frequent and in greater amounts. Finally, when looking at White donors, I find considerably less variation from cycle to cycle and after accounting for the relative size of White donors, the extent to which White candidates rely on co-racial donors seems to be largely a reflection of donor demographics compared to other groups.

In order to evaluate the extent to which minority candidates are better able to raise money from co-racial candidates. I estimate a similar set of regression models

Co-Racial Ratio of Unique Donors Contributed to Candidate

Logged Scale



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

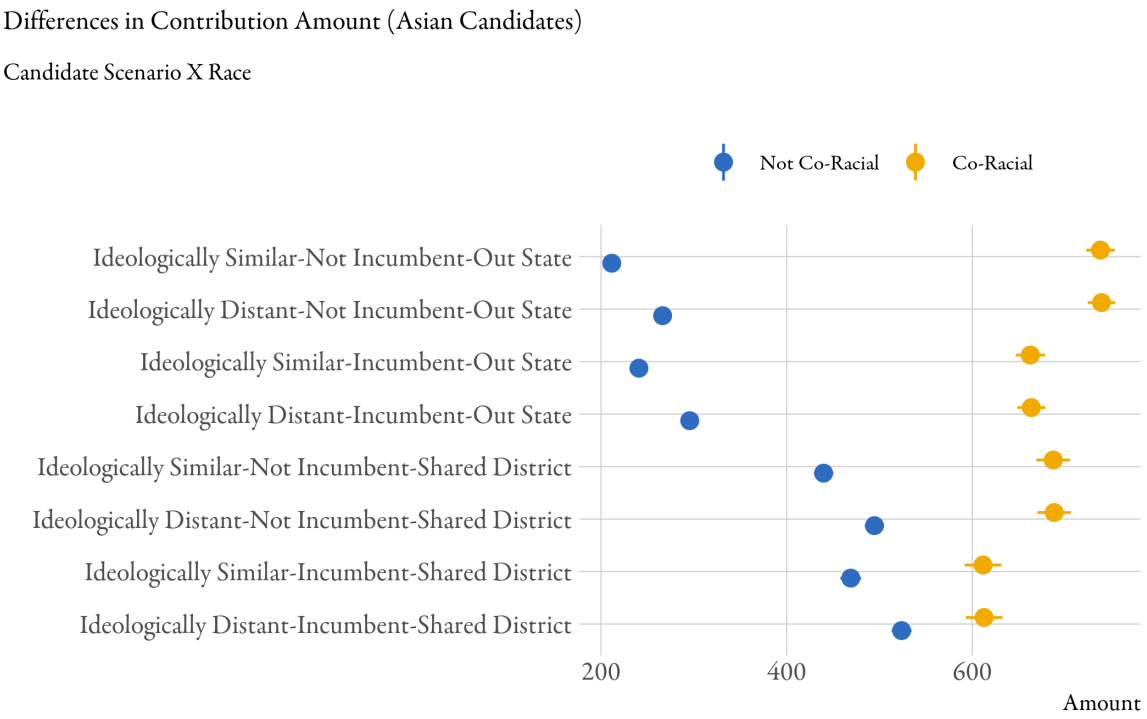
Figure 4.5: Co-Racial Share of Unique Donors Contributed to Candidate

that were described in Chapter 2, where I unpack differences across racial groups by looking at variation in predicted contribution amount. In this chapter, I switch focus from looking at the strategic decisions of donors, and subset the contribution records by *candidate race*. Here, I compare the differences in the amount of money candidates receive from co-racial donors versus non co-racial donors while varying incumbency status, geographic proximity, and ideological distance. Similar to the previous chapter, I account for the conditional effect of shared race on conventional factors, the primary explanatory variable is interacted with measures of incumbency status, ideological proximity and geographic proximity.

In terms of expectations, I again turn to the scholarship on conventional donor behavior described in the first chapter that highlight the importance of incumbency status, ideological and geographic proximity. Thus, if Asian American and Latino candidates have a unique ability to draw contributions from co-racial donors, we should expect that the predicted amount received by co-racial donors to be higher than non co-racial donors, regardless of other candidate characteristics.

To illustrate these differences, I estimate the predicted amount of money received for various different "candidate scenarios" based on the candidate characteristics included in each regression model for a co-racial donor, and a non co-racial donor.[2] Each scenario is based on different combinations of the three key components of the model: ideological distance, geographic proximity, and incumbency status. Together there are eight different candidate scenarios ranging from candidates who would be considered the *"most attractive"* under the conventional donor hypothesis (ideologically similar incumbents who are running in-district) to candidates with characteristics

[2]See Table A.6 in Appendix for regression results. In addition, see Table A.7 for model results including census subregion. When accounting for census region, the substantive results entirely hold.



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 4.6: Predicted Amount of Contribution

that should be considerably less desirable (ideologically distant non-incumbents who are running for office in a different state).

Figure 4.6 reports the predicted amount of contribution raised by Asian American candidates across the eight possible candidate scenarios. The results reveal three important findings. First, in each scenario, the predicted amount raised by a co-racial donor is higher than that of non co-racial donor, suggesting that Asian American candidates are in fact better able to raise money from Asian American donors. Second, while candidate characteristics appear to slightly alter the predicted contribution amount from a co-racial donor, they appear to work in the opposite direction that conventional expectations would expect. Asian American candidates who are running in the least conventionally desirable scenarios (iddeologically distant, non-incumbent,

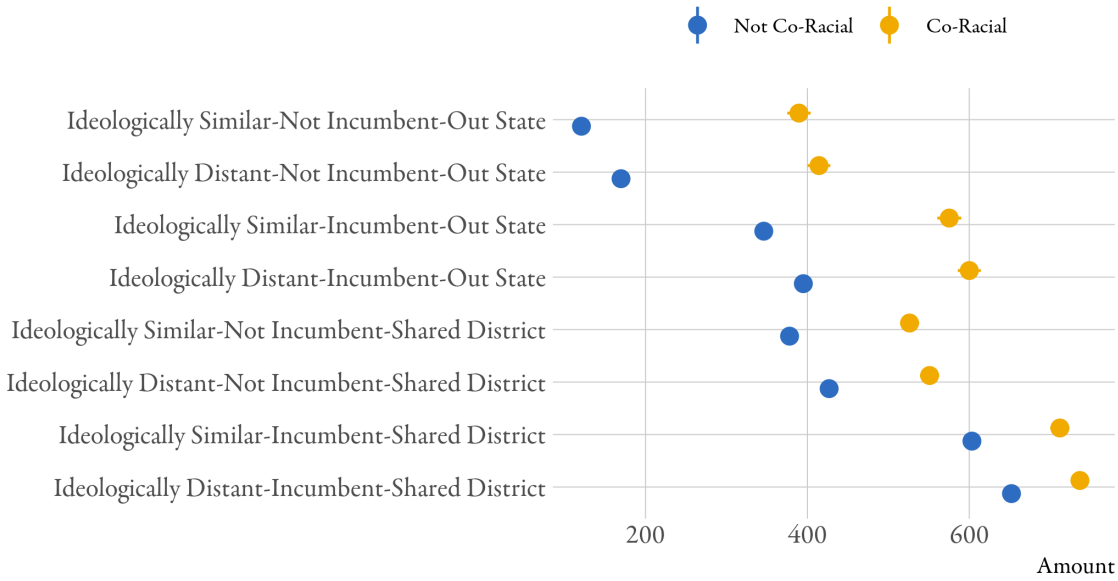
and out state) not only receive the more money from a co-racial donor than a non co-racial donor, but they also seem to benefit the **most** compared to other scenarios.

The underlying reason why Asian candidates appear to benefit the most from out-state Asian donors is unclear, though it might be the case that these candidates are actively seeking out co-racial donors in specific areas. In fact, other studies of candidates at more local levels suggest that Asian American candidates may employ fundraising strategies that tap into a broader co-racial or co-ethnic networks across the country (Lai, 2011). Similarly, studies of the spatial clustering of contribution networks have also suggested have also suggested the possibility of ethnic contagion effects, particularly among Asian American donors (Cho, 2003). Finally, we see little variation in the predicted amount as a function of ideological proximity which is somewhat surprising given the emphasize prior scholarship has placed on the role that ideological alignment plays in contribution decisions.

Moving to Latino candidates (Figure 4.7), the results are somewhat different, with strong evidence of an advantage among Latino candidates with Latino donors, but with conventional characteristics playing a much greater role in limiting this advantage. First, when looking within each scenario, we can see that Latino candidates receive a greater amount of money from co-racial donors than non co-racial donors. Similar to Asian American candidates, the largest benefit with Latino donors appears to be in scenarios where the candidate is not and incumbent and is running in a different state. However, unlike Asian American candidates, the predicted amount contributed for both co-racial and non co-racial donors largely aligns with conventional expectations. Latino candidates appear to get the most support from donors (regardless of race) when they are running as incumbents and in the same district as the donor.

Differences in Contribution Amount (Latino Candidates)

Candidate Scenario X Race



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 4.7: Predicted Amount of Contribution

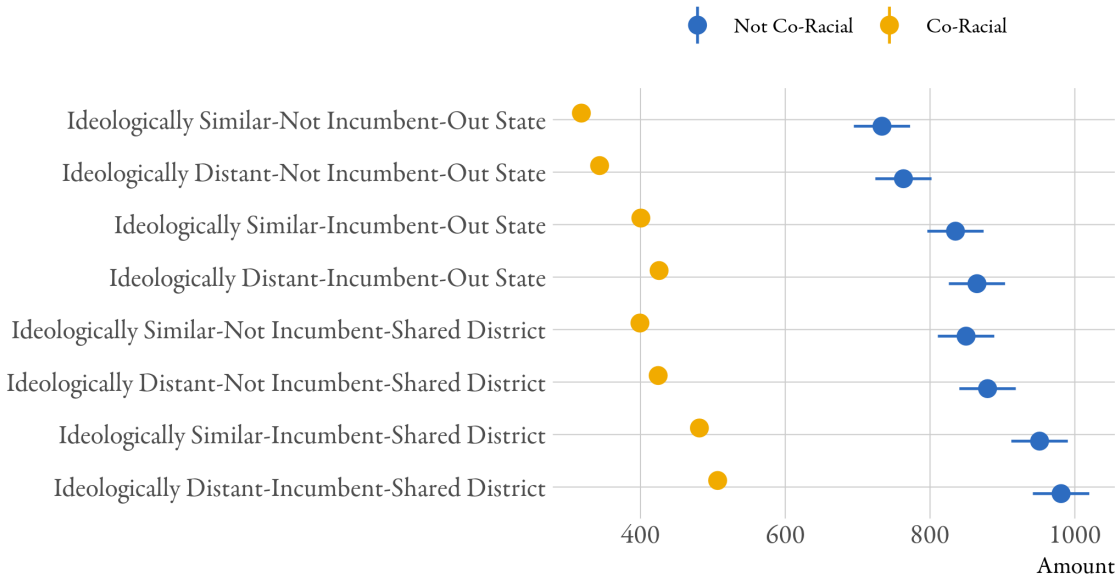
Finally, when looking at the results for White candidates (Figure 4.8), we see several differences compared to other groups. First, across each candidate scenario, the results indicate that White candidates actually receive raise money from non co-racial donors compared to White donors. That White candidates would not be better able to fundraise from White donors is not surprising given the results of the previous chapters, which indicate that White donors largely conform to conventional theories of donor behavior.

However, the difference in predicted contribution amount across each scenario is puzzling, and seems to suggest a potential advantage among White candidates for raising among non-White donors, though more analysis is likely needed. It is possible that these results are picking up some unmeasured characteristic that is shared by non-Whites, such as membership in a specific industry or occupation in line with a particular candidate that is driving preferences which would align with conventional theories of contribution behavior that emphasize the importance of giving based on material outcomes or access (Francia et al., 2003). However, when looking at the predicted contribution amounts within co-racial and non co-racial donors, the patterns largely align with conventional expectations for donating. White candidates receive the most money from donors (regardless of race), when running the most conventionally desirable scenarios.

The results seem to indicate that Latino and especially Asian American candidates seem to benefit from their ability to collect contributions from co-racial donors. However, it isn't clear exactly why *these donors* (out-district co-racials) are so much more likely to give. One possibility is that these candidates are actively searching for these donors in certain areas. To take a closer look at this possibility I subset the contribution data to the six election cycles from 2006 to 2016 and for each contribution merge in the district-level co-racial population share of the donor. The co-racial

Differences in Contribution Amount (White Candidates)

Candidate Scenario X Race



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 4.8: Predicted Amount of Contribution

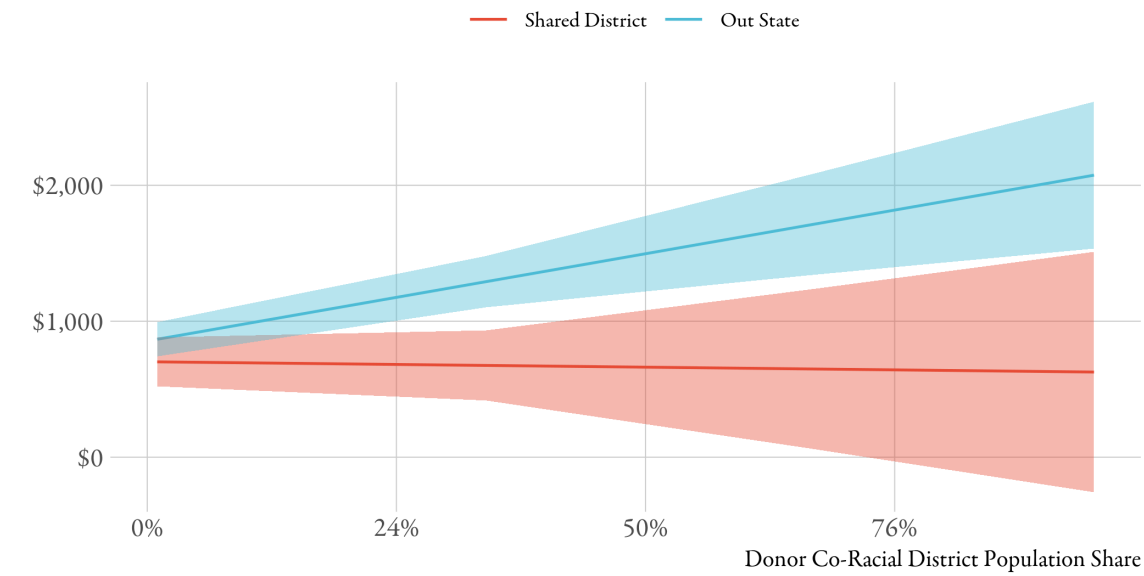
population share estimates are taken from the American Community Survey's 2004 to 2009, 2010-2014, and 2014-2018 5-Year Tables, with each year. The data is subset to these years due to the availability of records from the Census. Although limited, these records should provide some initial evidence as to whether Asian American and Latino candidates' fundraising advantages are related to whether or not out-district donors live in areas with large co-racial populations. Future work will incorporate a greater number of years to evaluate the extent to which this varies over longer periods of time.

I re-estimate two OLS models predicting contribution amount and include a three-way interaction between the co-racial donor dummy indicator, the measure of geographic proximity (which takes on values of shared district, shared state, and out state), and the measure of co-racial population share of the donor's home district.[3] The results of these models are reported in Table A.8. For ease of interpretation, I focus on the variation in predicted amount among co-racial donors depending on whether they are in the same district or in a different state.

In Figure 4.9, we can see that Among Asian Americans, the results suggest that the larger contribution amounts given to Asian American candidates from **out-district** co-racial donors, may in part be driven by the share of Asian Americans living in a donor's district. I find that Asian American candidates receive *significantly more money* from co-racial donors when they live in districts with large shares of Asian Americans.[4]

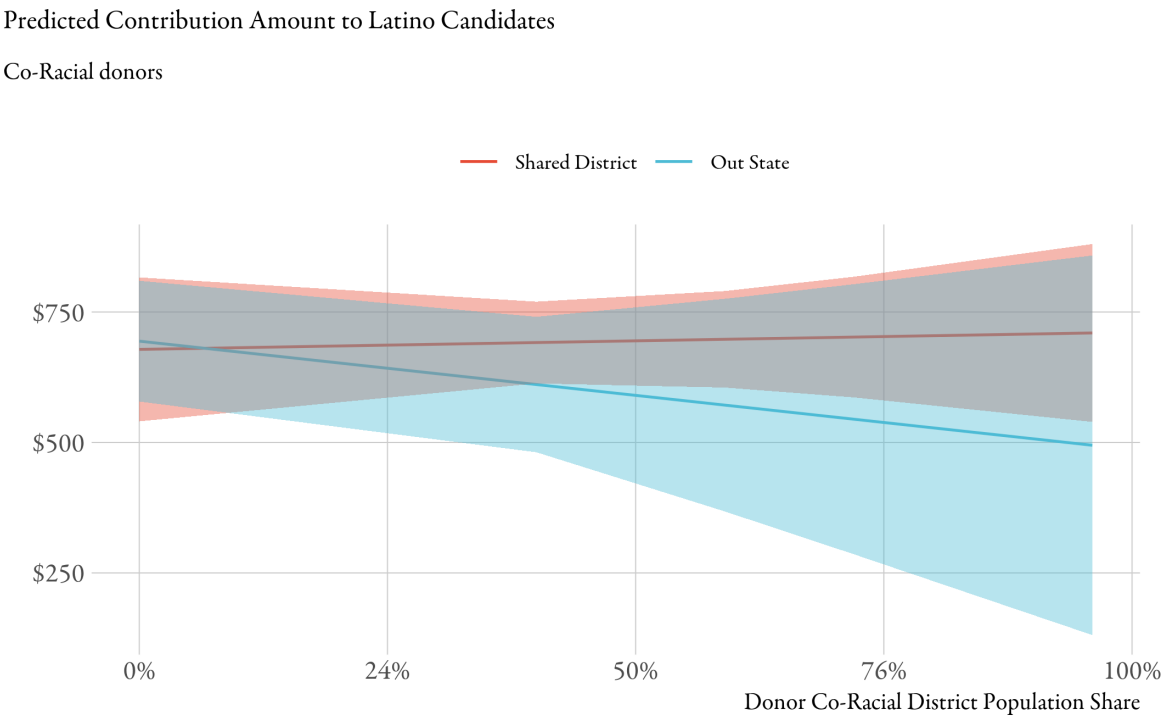
[3]The the remaining predictors that were previously included as interactions are now included on their own.

[4]Although the findings suggest that an Asian American donor's co-racial district population share seems to influence the amount they give to an out state Asian American candidate, it isn't clear the extent to which this relationship holds when accounting for whether or not their district has a descriptive candidate. In order to account for this possibility, I estimate a separate model and discuss the results in Appendix C.



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 4.9: Predicted Amount of Contribution



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure 4.10: Predicted Amount of Contribution

Moving to Latino candidates, the predicted contribution amounts in Figure 4.10 are less clear. Here, we do not see any significant differences with respect to the predicted contribution amount among Latino donors, regardless of whether or not they are in-district or reside in another state. Taken together, these results suggest that for Asian American candidates, their fundraising advantage may not just be among co-racial donors in any district, but that they stand to benefit the most from districts with a large Asian American population. Future work will seek to unpack these differences in greater detail by delving into the extent to which these donors are already actively giving or potentially being mobilized by co-racial candidates from other districts.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to unpack the trends and variation in the donor networks of Asian American and Latino congressional House candidates. While previous chapters have shown that donors belonging to these groups appear to make strategic decisions that do not conform with conventional expectations, we still know little about how their preferences relate to the fundraising abilities and characteristics of the candidates belonging to these groups.

I find that despite the fact that we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of Asian American Latinos donors and candidates over time, co-racial donors have remained a consistent source of support. After accounting for the relative supply of co-racial donors, I find that Asian American and Latino donors heavily rely on co-racial donors, in part because of their ability to fundraise from them, but also because their support appears to be more intense than others when we look at the amount and frequency of contributions.

Similarly, I find that Asian American candidates in particular seem to benefit the most from this co-racial fundraising advantage and from the donors we would least expect given conventional expectations. Latinos also appear to hold a fundraising advantage with co-racial donors, but the relationship of this benefit appears to be bounded by certain conventional characteristics such as incumbency status and geographic proximity. Taken together, the results suggest that for Latino candidates, the results suggests that their fundraising advantage with Latino donors has it's limits whereas Asian American candidates might be best served seeking co-racial support from donors regardless of where they are.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

One of the defining characteristics of American democracy is the presumption of equality (Dahl, 2006). However, as the cost of elections continues to rise, the opportunity for certain groups of citizens to have their voices heard have also increased. Before and after reaching office, the elected officials that we have chosen to represent us in congress will likely spend most of their time thinking about raising money and, consequently, spend most of their time with the small group of Americans who give political contributions. At the same time, the United States is undergoing a significant demographic shift, with several states becoming majority minority and the rest of the country soon to follow. This massive change in our electorate has unfortunately not come with a corresponding shift in who represents us in government. Specifically, despite the fact that Asian Americans and Latinos are the fastest growing racial groups in the country, they still are significantly under-represented in government.

This dissertation argues that we should expand our study of campaign donors to account for the significant demographic changes in our country. Conventional theories of campaign donors have largely focused on explaining the role that certain characteristics play in understanding campaign contributors. These characteristics largely align with traditional models of political participation and behavior which emphasize the importance of partisanship and ideological attachment. However, the extent to which certain groups like racial and ethnic minorities might differ from these expectations have largely been ignored. I argue that instead of assuming that donors belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups will act and hold attitudes similar to their White counterparts, we should ask if and why should we even expect them to in the first place?

In the preceding chapters, I unpacked this question in several ways. First, in chapter two, I sought to answer the question of whether or not Asian American and Latino donors actually conform to conventional expectations for donor behavior in three different areas: who donates, motivations for giving, and who do donors actually give to. Across these areas, I find that conventional theories largely fail to adequately address the differences seen among these groups. First, when considering who actually donates, I find that unlike conventional theories, which emphasize the role that socioeconomic status in explaining participation, do not fully explain why Asian Americans and Latinos donate. For these groups, we see a more complicated picture with other factors such as racial identity attachment playing an important role in addition to socioeconomic factors. Second, when looking to the motivations of donors, the results are more mixed, but do not appear to align with conventional theories of donor motivations either. Finally, when we look to the actual strategic decisions made by Asian Americans and Latinos, the differences could not be more clear. Rather that contributing on the basis of ideological proximity, incumbency

status or geographic proximity, the contribution decisions of Asian American and Latinos donors strongly suggest that they hold preferences for co-racial candidates.

In chapter three I sought to unpack this co-racial preference further and situate these findings the context of studies of preferences for co-racial representation. Here, I depart from existing approaches which have largely focused on *voting* as the primary way to investigate co-racial preference for representatives, and highlight how donor behavior can compliment existing approaches. Specifically, I show how the disadvantages of *voting-centric* approaches limit our ability to understand the strength and bounds of co-racial preferences and how donor behavior overcomes these obstacles. Using this framework, I evaluate the extent to which co-racial preferences held among Asian American and Latino donors are driven by an underlying want for descriptive representation or an explicit desire for representation outside their district or for representation in a more collective sense. In addition, I explore the extent to which Asian American co-racial preferences are in part driven by ethnic group preferences, and find that Indians and Vietnamese donors hold especially strong preferences for *co-ethnic* candidates in addition to co-racial candidates.

Finally, in chapter four, I switch the focus from Asian American and Latino donors to the actual targets of their contributions, the candidates themselves. While previous chapters have suggested that donors belonging to these groups prefer co-racial candidates, the extent to which minority candidates are able to leverage this preference is unclear. To help answer this question, I take a descriptive look at the variation in the co-racial representativeness of minority candidate donor networks over time. Previous studies of minority candidates have not considered if and how these candidates rely on co-racial contributions and whether or not this is robust to other candidate characteristics. I find that Asian American and Latino candidates have consistently relied on co-racial donors to support their election campaigns. In addi-

tion, I find that donors belonging to these groups may also support their candidates with more intensity, giving with greater frequency and in greater amounts. Finally, I find that Asian American candidates appear to benefit the most from their ability to fundraise from co-racial donors precisely in the situations where conventional expectations about donor preferences would expect the least amount of support. Similarly, I find that Latino candidates also hold a fundraising advantage with co-racial donors, but that this advantage is actually bounded by certain candidate characteristics such as incumbency status and geographic proximity.

5.2 Research Limitations and Next Steps

I have identified two primary limitations that need to be addressed as this project moves beyond this dissertation. First, it is unclear how Asian American and Latino donors' preferences for co-racial candidates interact with other identities such as gender. Prior work has shown that female Democratic donors may prioritize the election of female candidates over other candidate characteristics such as incumbency status (Thomsen and Swers, 2017). Understanding the extent to which co-racial preferences and co-gender preferences relate to one another represents a challenge. Future work should try and reconcile these findings by explicitly accounting for racial and gender characteristics for both donors and candidates in administrative records. I discuss how I plan to do so below.

I plan to apply more recent methodological techniques that consider the first name of campaign donors and congressional candidates to estimate gender.[1] A potential problem with this approach is that it is unclear the extent to which these methods

[1]For example, genderize.io is a web api that allows for batch coding of first names for gender and crucially includes data for Asian countries.

will produce reliable estimates since they have not been widely adopted in academic research as of yet. However, in order to overcome this issue, I will systematically evaluate the accuracy and precision of this method by producing estimates of gender for current and historical congresswomen. This would allow me verify the accuracy of the gender estimation technique as I can compare it against the known gender of each congresswoman. Thus, future analysis of my contribution records will be able to speak to the intersection of race and gender preferences and if and how those preference interact with each other.

Second, another important limitation is the extent to which these findings can speak to the many Americans who give political contributions that are less than $200, since they are not required to be individually recorded. Many candidates, such as Bernie Sanders have made a point to highlight the fact that the majority of their donations have come from small dollar donors. The concern here is that donors who give less than the $200 dollar limit may hold fundamentally different preferences compared to those who give in amounts that are actually recorded in contribution records.

I plan to address this problem through leveraging a significant shift in congressional fundraising strategy that has occurred in the past several election cycles. As the demand for money in congressional elections continues to grow and the popularity of online fundraising rises, Democratic congressional candidates have largely consolidated their fundraising strategies by relying heavily on a third-party conduit called ActBlue to collect and aggregate contributions. As a third party conduit, ActBlue is subject to different disclosure guidelines.[2] Importantly, they are required to disclose the individual-level information of **all of their donors regardless of amount**.

[2]Among Republicans, the shift to a single entity has been slower, but the creation of entities that copy the structure of ActBlue, such as WinRed, suggest that congressional fundraising among Republicans will eventually head in this direction.

Thus, by collecting the contribution records of third-party conduits like ActBlue, I will be able to include donors who contribute less than $200 in future analyses and evaluate the extent to which their preferences differ from those who give more.[3]

[3]Several news articles have been written about the feasibility of using ActBlue data for this purpose. For example see here, and here.

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Appendix A

Appendix of Tables

Table A.1: Congressional Donor Trends

Donor Race	Avg. Contribution	Out-State	Out-District	Democrat	Incumbent	Challenger	Winner
Asian	$584.50	28.47%	76.72%	66.0%	59.18%	24.72%	51.46%
Black	$478.92	18.74%	68.83%	54.9%	57.02%	22.95%	54.88%
Hispanic	$514.38	21.16%	73.20%	59.7%	59.48%	25.84%	53.48%
White	$484.94	24.31%	67.39%	43.1%	58.89%	23.76%	53.99%

Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Table A.2: Co-Racial Giving (Initial Contributions)

	Amount (in dollars)		
	Asians	**Latinos**	**Whites**
Co-Racial Candidate	230.776***	89.262***	131.763***
	(11.407)	(13.455)	(4.279)
Incumbent	24.416***	7.262	37.985***
	(5.404)	(5.510)	(4.325)
Ideological Proximity	−41.505***	−33.572***	−38.874***
	(7.851)	(9.412)	(6.779)
Shared State	67.748***	136.191***	198.769***
	(6.400)	(6.576)	(4.809)
Shared District	19.471***	96.518***	130.522***
	(7.536)	(7.906)	(5.672)
District Partisanship	55.456***	23.233***	55.914***
	(3.551)	(3.969)	(0.866)
Co-Racial Candidate Supply	7177.876***	−1711.683***	2385.938***
	(580.953)	(188.862)	(27.924)
Co-Racial Candidate X Incumbent	−113.458***	53.766***	−71.527***
	(11.596)	(9.912)	(4.420)
Co-Racial Candidate X Ideological Proximity	−95.418***	−59.568***	−2.482
	(19.066)	(17.557)	(6.954)
Co-Racial Candidate X Shared State	−51.599***	−34.586**	−139.774***
	(12.528)	(13.735)	(4.944)
Co-Racial Candidate X Shared District	−52.509***	49.531***	−103.966***
	(16.776)	(15.839)	(5.804)
Constant	375.519***	430.513***	−1888.941***
	(10.475)	(11.613)	(25.358)
N	75103	67178	2182851
R-squared	0.019	0.020	0.010

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Table A.3: Co-Racial Giving (Initial Contributions + Census Region)

	Amount (in dollars)		
	Asians	**Latinos**	**Whites**
Co-Racial Candidate	232.748***	90.525***	132.261***
	(11.440)	(13.432)	(4.273)
Incumbent	23.152***	2.874	44.288***
	(5.422)	(5.506)	(4.323)
Ideological Proximity	−39.796***	−38.008***	−40.044***
	(7.856)	(9.398)	(6.768)
Shared State	70.543***	139.276***	202.163***
	(6.423)	(6.565)	(4.805)
Shared District	23.816***	105.284***	137.090***
	(7.553)	(7.916)	(5.667)
District Partisanship	53.568***	25.559***	48.367***
	(3.565)	(3.985)	(0.872)
Co-Racial Candidate Supply	7397.142***	−1627.085***	2248.116***
	(581.417)	(188.788)	(27.934)
Northeast	57.684***	91.797***	84.084***
	(7.886)	(9.223)	(1.355)
South	61.766***	113.666***	100.562***
	(7.979)	(8.287)	(1.251)
West	61.581***	45.518***	47.388***
	(7.455)	(8.418)	(1.368)
Co-Racial Candidate X Incumbent	−114.971***	44.413***	−77.363***
	(11.621)	(9.913)	(4.417)
Co-Racial Candidate X Ideological Proximity	−96.658***	−61.769***	−1.821
	(19.059)	(17.525)	(6.942)
Co-Racial Candidate X Shared State	−61.708***	−40.245***	−136.388***
	(12.743)	(13.736)	(4.940)
Co-Racial Candidate X Shared District	−62.487***	38.117**	−105.568***
	(16.927)	(15.872)	(5.800)
Constant	321.253***	350.479***	−1826.975***
	(12.107)	(13.528)	(25.349)
N	75103	67178	2182851
R-squared	0.020	0.024	0.013

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Table A.4: Donors with Descriptive Candidates

	Amount (in dollars)		
	Asians	**Latinos**	**Whites**
Co-Racial Candidate	176.641***	157.625***	36.154***
	(6.420)	(8.670)	(9.350)
Descriptive Candidate	−17.814***	32.711***	−17.908*
	(6.154)	(6.716)	(9.150)
Incumbent	83.115***	179.354***	123.485***
	(4.625)	(5.704)	(1.123)
Ideological Proximity	91.531***	185.486***	146.178***
	(6.266)	(8.884)	(1.743)
District Partisanship	84.828***	37.358***	68.678***
	(3.508)	(5.014)	(1.060)
Co-Racial Candidate Supply	−234.132	−1602.318***	2301.546***
	(587.545)	(244.566)	(34.463)
Co-Racial Candidate X Descriptive Rep.	23.523*	−28.467**	42.156***
	(13.221)	(12.712)	(9.563)
Constant	440.202***	373.130***	−1783.869***
	(9.435)	(13.716)	(32.614)
N	148071	135999	5134128
R-squared	0.016	0.017	0.007

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Table A.5: Co-Ethnic Giving

	Amount (in dollars)
Filipino	-196.251^{**}
	(84.347)
Indian	-125.172^{***}
	(37.237)
Japanese	-146.280^{***}
	(41.142)
Korean	-78.573^{***}
	(23.804)
Vietnamese	-56.484
	(45.655)
Co-ethnic	101.990^{***}
	(16.623)
Incumbent	51.165^{***}
	(11.906)
Ideological Proximity	-63.590^{***}
	(15.929)
District Partisanship	91.087^{***}
	(11.051)
Co-Racial Candidate Supply	21676.690^{***}
	(1430.650)
Filipino X Co-ethnic	0.580
	(145.239)
Indian X Co-ethnic	456.385^{***}
	(41.570)
Japanese X Co-ethnic	-35.121
	(44.419)
Korean X Co-ethnic	50.641
	(31.852)
Vietnamese X Co-ethnic	174.653^{***}
	(58.116)
Constant	295.837^{***}
	(25.127)
N	21834
R-squared	0.059

$^{***}p < .01$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{*}p < .1$

Note: reference origin group is Chinese American.

Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Table A.6: Co-Racial Fundraising

	Amount (in dollars)		
	Asians	**Latinos**	**Whites**
Co-Racial Donor	540.610***	275.062***	−414.200***
	(9.745)	(7.959)	(21.717)
Incumbent	29.246***	225.318***	101.554***
	(4.482)	(2.303)	(2.545)
Ideological Proximity	238.135***	181.134***	114.140***
	(7.385)	(3.498)	(3.931)
Shared State	294.944***	301.414***	170.964***
	(4.811)	(2.443)	(3.014)
Shared District	228.265***	257.201***	116.187***
	(5.767)	(3.039)	(3.232)
District Partisanship	142.600***	57.814***	69.089***
	(3.128)	(1.648)	(0.755)
Co-Racial Candidate Supply	−18.113***	−7.938*	511.525***
	(6.960)	(4.080)	(24.609)
Co-Racial Donor X Incumbent	−104.850***	−39.591***	−19.386***
	(8.225)	(5.617)	(2.670)
Co-Racial Donor X Ideological Proximity	−233.418***	−89.447***	−17.266***
	(12.946)	(9.297)	(4.146)
Co-Racial Donor X Shared State	−267.104***	−154.370***	−24.200***
	(9.017)	(7.551)	(3.187)
Co-Racial Donor X Shared District	−279.164***	−120.508***	−35.287***
	(11.364)	(8.304)	(3.387)
Constant	105.739***	79.098***	265.497***
	(6.848)	(3.938)	(2.864)
N	134633	350709	8060522
R-squared	0.109	0.125	0.007

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Table A.7: Co-Racial Fundraising (with Census Region)

	Amount (in dollars) to Candidate Race		
	Asians	**Latinos**	**Whites**
Co-Racial Donor	545.757***	257.392***	−280.987***
	(9.757)	(7.901)	(21.739)
Incumbent	21.760***	202.713***	100.066***
	(4.624)	(2.309)	(2.543)
Ideological Proximity	237.754***	161.138***	110.401***
	(7.382)	(3.481)	(3.928)
Shared State	297.146***	318.279***	174.792***
	(5.001)	(2.503)	(3.013)
Shared District	229.556***	276.354***	114.272***
	(5.822)	(3.102)	(3.231)
District Partisanship	143.590***	57.347***	60.496***
	(3.136)	(1.672)	(0.762)
Co-Racial Candidate Supply	−13.696*	−4.146	362.199***
	(7.021)	(4.044)	(24.633)
Northeast	−68.896***	161.712***	64.020***
	(7.193)	(4.040)	(1.152)
South	−18.912***	227.851***	97.685***
	(7.211)	(3.637)	(1.074)
West	−36.961***	64.220***	3.324***
	(6.700)	(3.497)	(1.153)
Co-Racial Donor X Incumbent	−97.987***	−47.765***	−19.336***
	(8.289)	(5.567)	(2.668)
Co-Racial Donor X Ideological Proximity	−237.117***	−94.797***	−18.236***
	(12.945)	(9.213)	(4.143)
Co-Racial Donor X Shared State	−266.111***	−161.202***	−20.784***
	(9.041)	(7.489)	(3.185)
Co-Racial Donor X Shared District	−276.145***	−143.937***	−31.182***
	(11.417)	(8.247)	(3.385)
Constant	138.301***	−39.239***	224.927***
	(8.716)	(4.792)	(2.953)
N	134633	350709	8060522
R-squared	0.110	0.141	0.009

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Table A.8: Co-Racial Giving (District population share)

	Amount (in dollars)	
	Contribs to Asians	**Contribs to Latinos**
Co-Racial	204.915**	153.372**
	(86.947)	(64.416)
Incumbent	4.949	162.113***
	(19.206)	(11.629)
Ideological Proximity	31.462	−64.840***
	(23.915)	(15.432)
In-State	59.134	148.509***
	(82.908)	(44.106)
In-District	242.446***	133.061***
	(87.325)	(46.530)
Co-Racial Pop	−29.725	−141.348***
	(108.207)	(48.737)
District Partisanship	−12.456	145.654***
	(19.532)	(6.650)
Co-Racial Candidate Supply	246.332***	159.060***
	(72.005)	(43.515)
Co-Racial X In-State	−21.987	−112.423
	(104.582)	(82.479)
Co-Racial X In-District	−395.109***	−148.823
	(124.312)	(91.883)
Co-Racial X Co-Racial Pop	1313.711***	−66.478
	(333.841)	(236.529)
In-State X Co-Racial Pop	−147.592	127.806*
	(126.661)	(70.302)
In-District X Co-Racial Pop	−637.856***	59.373
	(127.055)	(74.183)
Co-Racial X In-State X Co-Racial Pop	−1137.510***	65.823
	(384.087)	(290.587)
Co-Racial X In-District X Co-Racial Pop	−725.783	181.241
	(639.957)	(281.140)
Constant	472.185***	328.306***
	(78.708)	(43.969)
N	8329	16984
R-squared	0.038	0.073

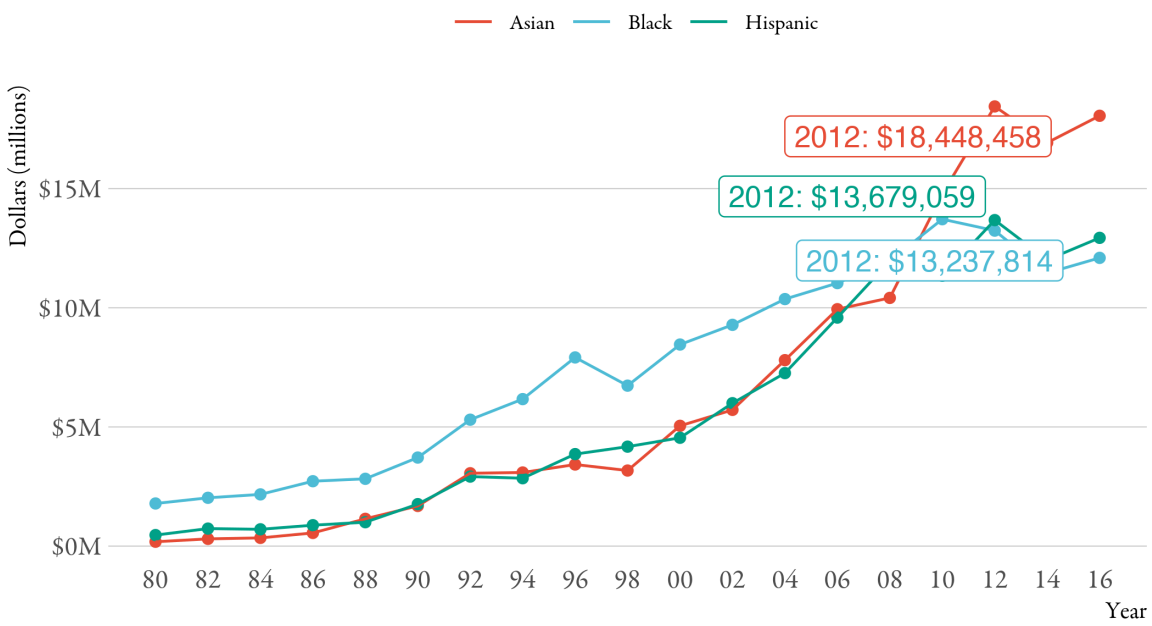
***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Appendix B

Appendix of Figures

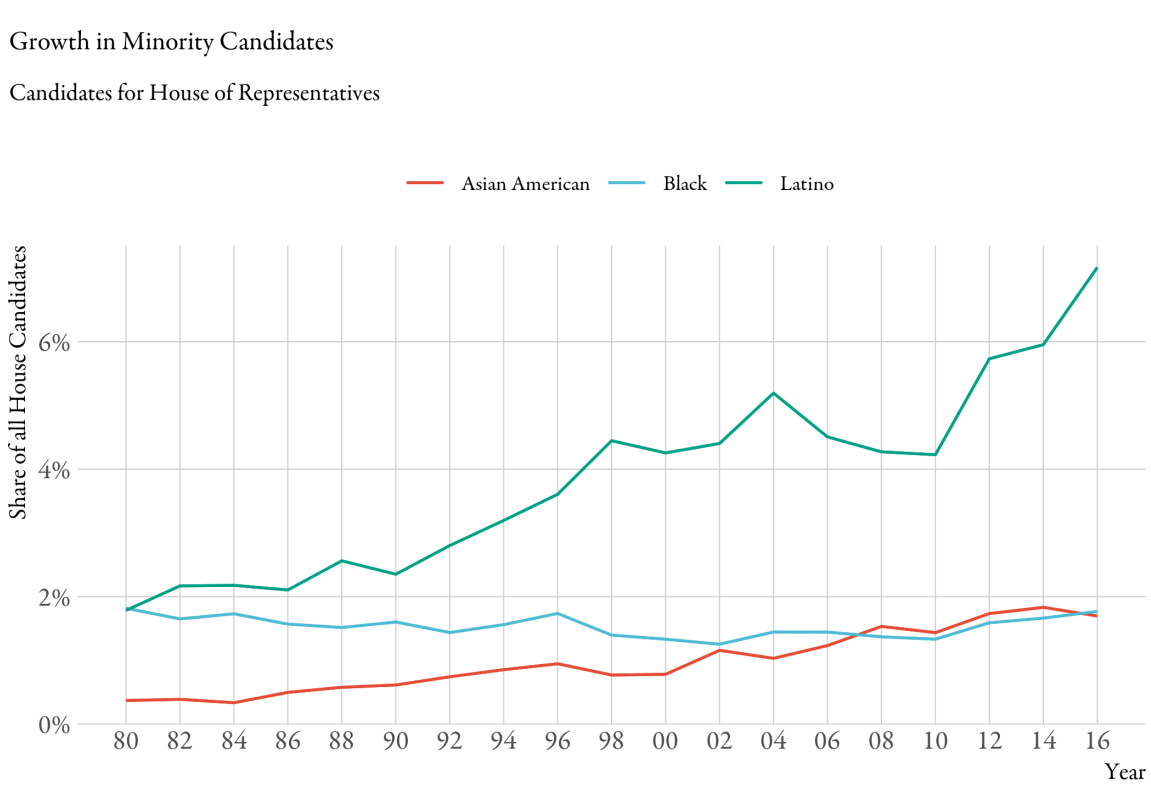
Total Amount Contributed

Contributions to House Elections



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure B.1: Total Amount Contributed

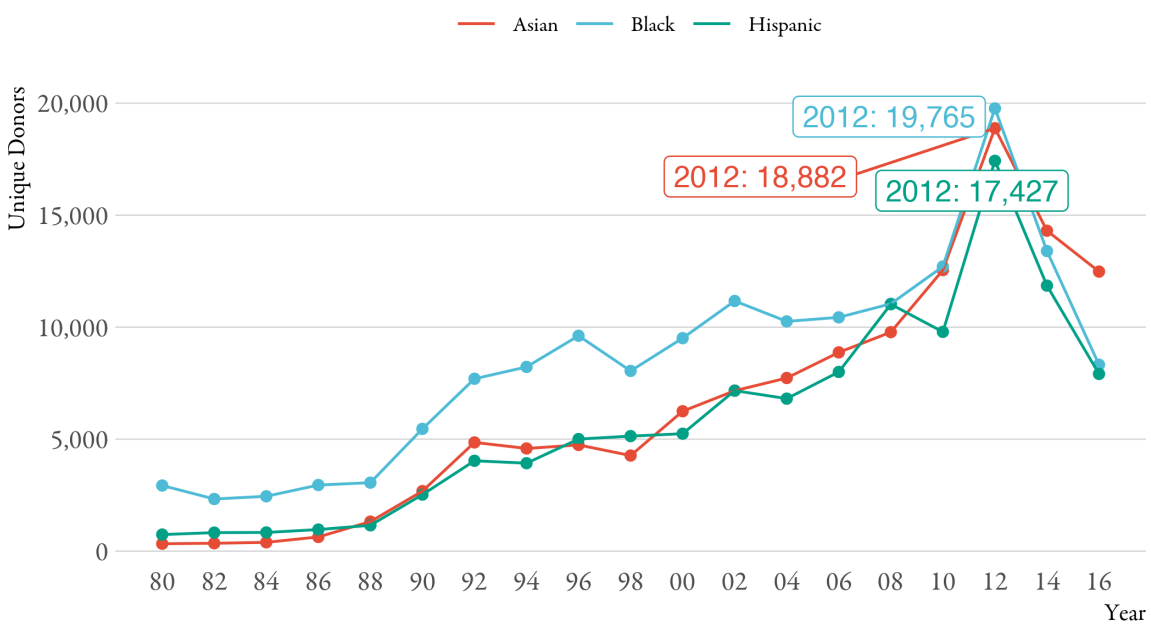


Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure B.2: Growth in Minority Candidates

Growth in unique congressional donors

Donors to House Elections

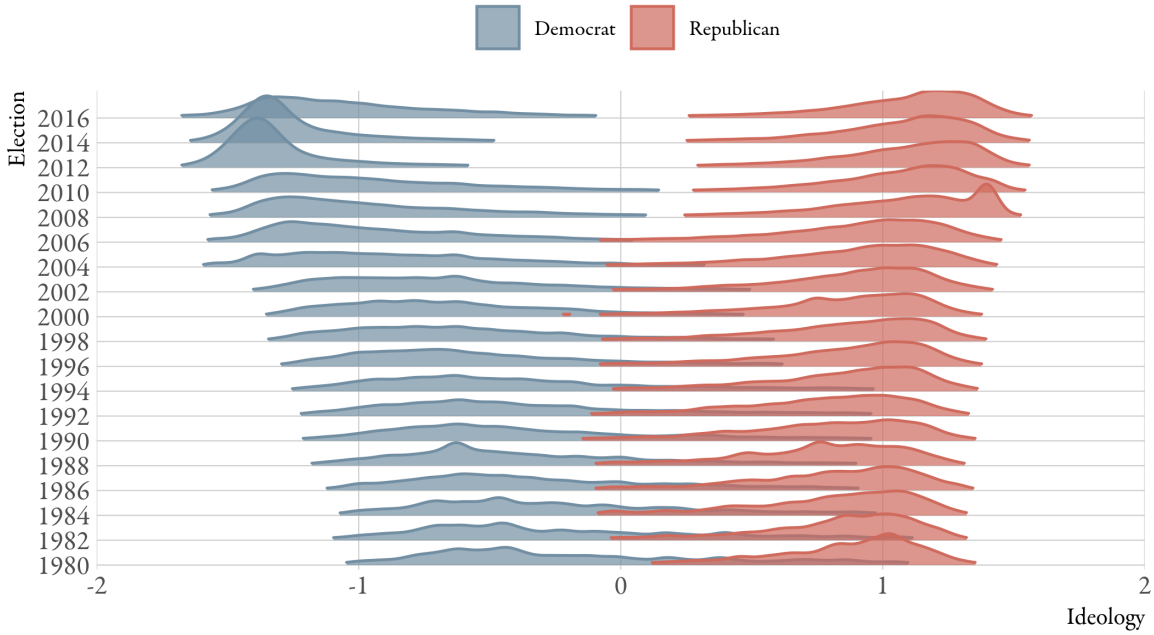


Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure B.3: Growth in Unique Donors

Congressional Donor Ideology by Recipient Party

Contributions to House Candidates

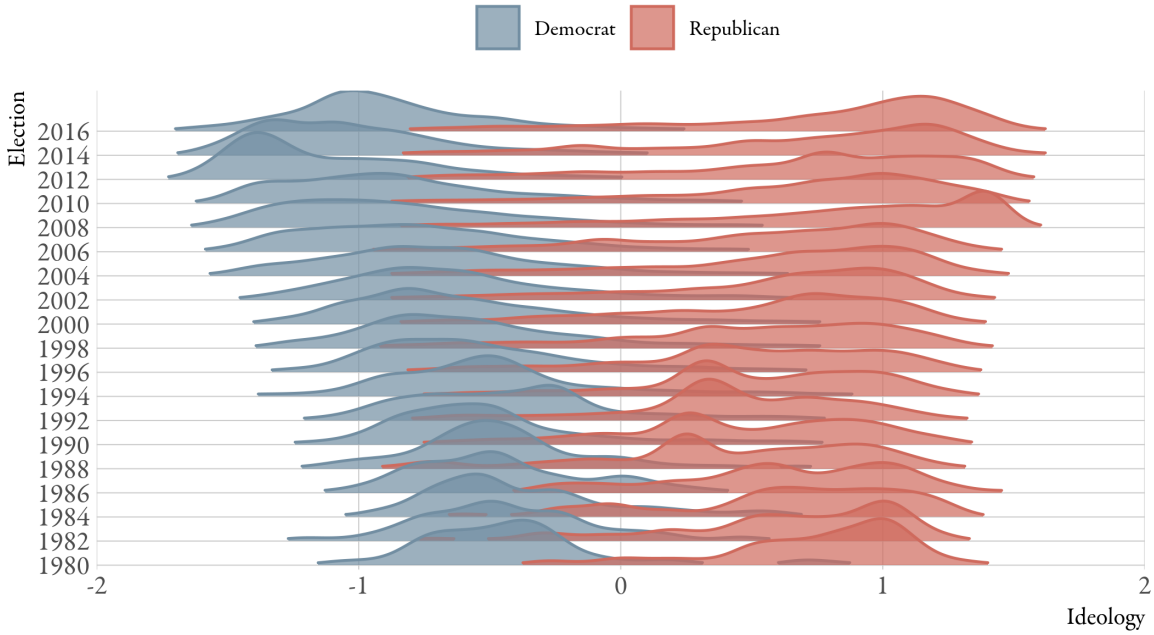


Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure B.4: Donor Ideology

Asian Congressional Donor Ideology by Recipient Party

Contributions to House Candidates

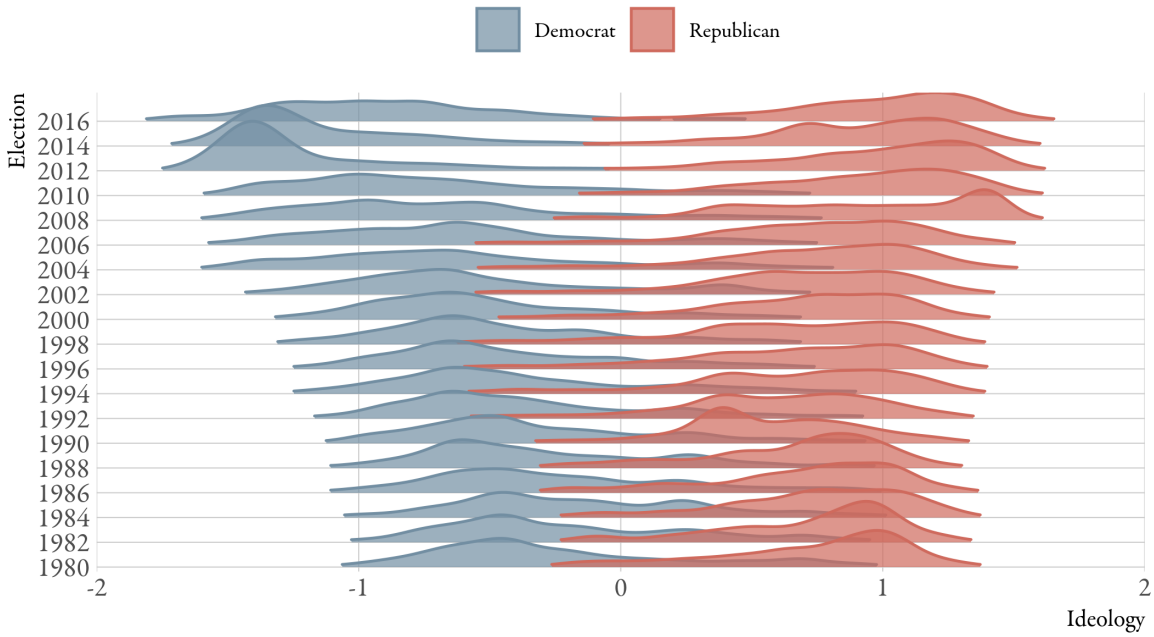


Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure B.5: Asian American Donor Ideology

Latino Congressional Donor Ideology by Recipient Party

Contributions to House Candidates



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure B.6: Latino Donor Ideology

Appendix C

Supplemental Appendix

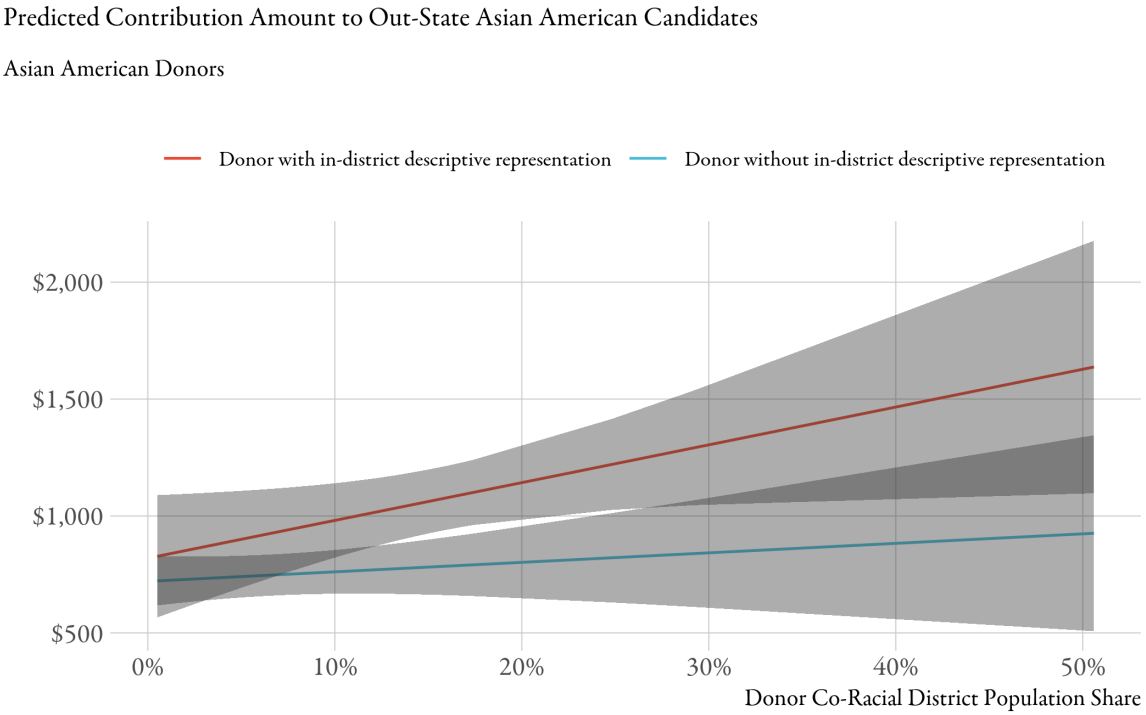
C.1 Supplement to Minority Candidate Donor Network Chapter

In order to evaluate the extent to which Asian American candidates are better able to raise money from Asian American donors is influenced by district-level characteristics, such as the co-racial share of the donor's home district, or by whether or not these donors have the opportunity to give to an in-district descriptive candidate, I estimate a supplementary model here. Similar to the model described in Chapter 4, I take the same set of contribution records (all contributions to Asian American candidates) and subset them further to only those contributions **from** Asian American donors (or co-racial contributions). I estimate an OLS model predicting the contribution amount as the main outcome of interest and include a three-way interaction term that includes: Geographic proximity(shared state, shared district, out state), Co-Racial Population (the share or percentage of Asian Americans in the donor's district), and a measure of

whether or not the donor has the opportunity to give to a co-racial candidate in their home district (a Descriptive Representative, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3).

The results of this model is reported in Table C.1. For ease of interpretation, I include a plot of predicted contribution amounts that focuses on the variation in contributions to *out-state* Asian American candidates as a function of whether or not they have an in-district co-racial candidate as well as the co-racial share of their home district population. In Figure C.1 we can see that the relationship is mixed. In line with the findings presented in Chapter 4, I find that the predicted contribution amount increases as the share of Asian Americans in the donor's home district increases. However, in this updated model which includes an interaction term with *in-district descriptive representative*, the results are less clear. Although the confidence bands overlap, for Asian Americans who have the opportunity to give to an in-district co-racial candidate (the red line), the results suggest that they may give **more money** than another Asian American donor who lives in a district with a similar share of Asian Americans, but **does not** have an in-district co-racial candidate.

Although there does not appear to be a significant difference between these estimates, this in part is driven by the lack of contribution records that can be used in this analysis. However, as mentioned in Chapter 4, future research will seek to address this problem by including more years of contribution data beyond those from 2005 to 2018.



Source: Augmented DIME Dataset

Figure C.1: Share of Candidates by Observed Cycles

Table C.1: Asian American Co-Racial Contribution Amount

	Amount (in dollars) **Contributions to Asian Candidates**
Incumbent	−24.217
	(50.216)
Ideological Proximity	101.538*
	(59.912)
Shared State	24.077
	(78.789)
Shared District	−296.182*
	(164.726)
Co-Racial Pop	406.466
	(474.980)
Descriptive-Rep	99.024
	(140.427)
District Partisanship	0.627
	(61.410)
Co-Racial Candidate Supply	6549.959
	(16361.490)
Shared State X Co-Racial Pop	−418.173
	(517.145)
Shared District X Co-Racial Pop	−1579.822
	(1004.791)
Shared State X Descriptive-Rep	39.022
	(512.380)
Shared District X Descriptive-Rep	
Co-Racial Pop X Descriptive-Rep	1209.561
	(893.154)
Shared State X Co-Racial Pop X Descriptive-Rep	−3219.175
	(3947.293)
Shared District X Co-Racial Pop X Descriptive-Rep	
Constant	603.789***
	(227.889)
N	1522
R-squared	0.043

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Source: Augmented DIME Dataset