

DIALOGUE: LOCAL ELECTIONS IN AMERICAN POLITICS

Does the descriptive representation of the working class “crowd out” women and minorities (and vice versa)? Evidence from the Local Elections in America Project

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If working-class Americans begin holding political office in larger numbers, could they eventually “crowd out” other historically underrepresented groups such as women and minorities? This paper develops a simple theory to predict when the descriptive representation of one social group will decrease the descriptive representation of others. I then use the Local Elections in America Project’s data to explore the links between the racial, gender, and social class makeup of candidates and officeholders in more than 18,000 local and county elections in California. The descriptive representation of workers does not seem to reduce female or minority representation. To the contrary, many working-class candidates *are* women and minorities, and those who are not do not seem to pose any threat of crowding out other historically underrepresented groups.

Keywords: class; race; gender; descriptive representation; crowding out; inequality

Politicians in the USA tend to be vastly better off than the people they represent. They are wealthier, more educated, and more likely to come from white-collar jobs (Beckett and Sunderland 1957; Carnes 2012a, 2013a; Domhoff 1967; Matthews 1954a, 1954b; Mills 1956; Sadin 2012; Zeller 1954). If millionaires were a political party, that party would make up just 3% of the country, but it would have a majority in the House of Representatives, a filibuster-proof supermajority in the Senate, a 5–4 majority on the Supreme Court, and a man in the White House. If working-class Americans¹ – people employed in manual labor and service industry jobs – were a political party, that party would have made up more than half of the country since the start of the twentieth century, but legislators from that party (those who last worked in blue-collar jobs before getting into politics) would never have held more than 2% of the seats in Congress.

In the last few years, scholars and activists have started paying closer attention to these economic and social class gaps between politicians and citizens in the USA.² One emerging line of research has found that lawmakers from different classes tend to bring different perspectives to the political process. Just as the shortage of women in office affects policy outcomes on issues related to gender (e.g., Berkman and O’Connor 1993; Swers 2002; Thomas 1991), the shortage of working-class people – who tend to be more progressive on economic issues – appears to bias

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policy on issues such as the minimum wage, taxes, and welfare spending toward the more conservative positions typically favored by affluent Americans (e.g., Carnes 2012a, 2013a; Griffin and Anewalt-Rensburg 2013; Grose 2013). Building on these findings, another nascent literature has begun to ask why there are so few working-class Americans in political office and what reformers can do about it (Carnes 2012b; Sadin 2012; Sojourner 2013; see also Campbell and Cowley 2014).

At the same time, political activists are rapidly developing new programs to elect more blue-collar workers. In New Jersey, the AFL-CIO has run a “candidate school” since the 1990s that has identified, recruited, and trained hundreds of working-class citizens to run for offices ranging from local government to the state legislature. The program has been strikingly successful – its graduates have a 75% win rate in over 900 elections – and in the last three years similar working-class candidate schools have been launched in California, Connecticut, Maine, Nevada, New York, and Oregon (Carnes 2013a, Chap. 6)

How will these kinds of programs affect the descriptive representation of women and racial or ethnic minorities?³ Like the working class, women and minorities have always been numerically underrepresented in our political institutions. In the last half century, female and minority candidates have made significant strides, thanks in large part to programs to identify, recruit, and support women and minorities (e.g., EMILY’s List). As working-class groups begin adopting similar strategies, however, it is possible that working-class candidates may begin competing for the same political turf – and slowing or even reversing the gains women and minorities have made. As scholars and activists begin paying more attention to the shortage of working-class Americans in our political institutions, it is important to ask, *Would increasing the number of politicians from the working class affect the progress of other social groups that have had to fight for inclusion in our political institutions?*

Most research on descriptive representation focuses on just one social group at a time. As more and more groups make efforts to increase their descriptive representation, however, scholars will need to begin paying attention to the relationship between the descriptive representation of different social groups.

This paper develops a simple theory to predict when *crowding out* will occur, when increases in the descriptive representation of one social group will decrease the descriptive representation of others. I then use data from the Local Elections in America Project (LEAP) on over 18,000 local and county elections in California to explore the links between the racial, gender, and social class makeup of candidates and officeholders – and assess whether increasing the descriptive representation of working-class Americans poses a risk of crowding out other historically underrepresented groups.

When will crowding out occur?

The numerical or descriptive representation of a social group in our political institutions is important. For one, the descriptive representation of a social group can affect the group’s *substantive representation*, the extent to which lawmakers work to advance the group’s goals and interests (Pitkin 1967). Politicians often have considerable leeway when they make decisions in office (Reeher 1996). As a result, lawmakers from different social groups tend to behave differently in ways that mirror the differences between those groups in the general public. Lawmakers from different racial groups, for instance, tend to vote differently on a wide range of race-related issues, even after controlling for other things that might influence how they vote, like the party they belong to or the views of their constituents (Canon 1999; Griffin and Newman 2008; Whitby 1997). Likewise, even after accounting for other factors, male and female legislators tend to vote differently on women’s issues (Swers 2002); veterans and non-veterans tend

to vote differently on defense issues (Gelpi and Feaver 2002); and religious people, parents of schoolchildren, and smokers tend to vote differently on religious issues, educational issues, and smoking issues (Burden 2007). When a social group is numerically underrepresented, its views and interests are less likely to be voiced – and less likely to be influential – in our political institutions.

The descriptive representation of a social group can also affect the political attitudes and behaviors of members of that group in the general public. When politicians from a given social group hold office, members of that group often feel more favorably toward those politicians (Branton, Cassese, and Jones 2012), feel more positively about the political process in general (Brunell, Anderson, and Cremona 2008; Scherer and Curry 2010), feel more interested in politics (Reingold and Harrell 2010), and are more likely to vote (Griffin and Keane 2006; Rocha et al. 2010) and participate in the politics in other ways (Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Gay 2002). Descriptive representation not only affects substantive representation – it seems to affect the political engagement of a given social group.

But how does the descriptive representation of a social group affect the descriptive representation of other social groups? Most research on descriptive representation has focused on just one trait, like race or gender, not the relationship between the descriptive representation of multiple social groups or personal characteristics. Obviously, when groups are mutually exclusive, increasing the descriptive representation of one will automatically decrease the descriptive representation of others. As women make up greater percentages of our political institutions, by definition men will make up smaller percentages. But what about groups that can potentially overlap? How do increases in the percentage of women in office affect the descriptive representation of racial and ethnic minorities? How does the descriptive representation of blue-collar workers affect the descriptive representation of women and minorities?

Questions like these are especially important in light of longstanding inequalities in the racial, gender, and social class makeup of our political institutions – and recent interest in increasing the descriptive representation of blue-collar workers. Women and minorities are still numerically underrepresented in virtually every level and branch of government, but both groups have made steady progress in our political institutions in the last half century. After World War II, Congress was 98% white and 98% male. Today, women make up 19% of Congress, African-Americans make up 8%, and Latinos make up 6%. Workers, however, have not made descriptive gains in Congress: 98% of members of Congress came from white-collar jobs in 1945, and 98% of them came from white-collar jobs in 2008 (Carnes 2013a). In some jurisdictions, the working class has actually lost ground. Between 1976 and 2007, the share of state legislators who were Black or Latino grew from 9% to 11%, and women's representation skyrocketed from 8% to 24%. During the same period, the share of state legislators from blue-collar jobs fell from 5% to 3%.⁴ These trends could be unrelated, of course. But they also raise the prospect that working-class Americans somehow compete for the same political turf as women and minorities – and that efforts to increase the descriptive representation of the working class might eventually lead to decreases in the descriptive representation of female and minority politicians.

When an underrepresented social group begins growing in our political institutions, there are three conditions that should signal that the group will soon begin displacing some other social group. *First, politicians from the “new” group – from the group that is growing – do not overlap substantially with the existing groups.* If lawmakers from the working class are almost all white men, adding more working-class lawmakers could decrease the number of women and minorities in our political institutions. However, if politicians from blue-collar jobs are more likely to be women or minorities (relative to lawmakers from white-collar jobs), adding more workers would actually *increase* the descriptive representation of women or minorities,

other things equal. In our political institutions, one social group can only pose a risk of crowding out another social group if the two do not overlap.

The risk of crowding out is heightened if, *second*, *politicians from the new group tend to run and win in the kinds of elections that favor politicians from the existing groups*. If there are certain types of elections where women and minorities tend to run and win, and if working-class candidates tend to run and win in those kinds of races, too (and if workers are disproportionately white men), working-class candidates will tend to drive out women and minorities. If women and minorities can run and win just about anywhere, on the other hand, even if workers began winning in one type of election (say, for instance, in heavily working-class districts), ambitious women and minorities could simply set their sights elsewhere.

That is, unless, *third*, *politicians from the existing groups already run and win in almost all of the elections where they stand a chance*. If there are more than enough political offices to go around, working-class representation could increase substantially without displacing female or minority candidates. If, on the other hand, most of the offices that women and minorities tend to fill are already filled by women and minorities, increasing working-class representation could eventually pose a threat to women and minorities (assuming, again, that workers are disproportionately white men). If women and minorities have already reached some natural limit to what they can accomplish in our political institutions, adding more white men to the mix will cost women's and minorities' seats.

When would we expect working-class representation to reduce the descriptive representation of women and minorities? If working-class candidates are mostly white men, and if they tend to run and win in the kinds of races in which women and minorities tend to run and win, and if there are not many of those kinds of races left, increasingly the descriptive representation of working-class Americans will inevitably crowd women and minorities out of our political institutions.

Does it?

Evidence from the Leap data base

To answer this question, we need information that was once hard to come by: individual-level data on a large sample of political candidates that includes information about their races, genders, and social classes.

Unfortunately, data on candidates have long been scarce, especially compared to data on other subjects, like the political opinions of ordinary Americans or the conduct of members of Congress. We know a great deal about regular citizens and a great deal about politicians. We know far less about the people in between, the citizens who choose to run for public office.

This paper takes advantage of a significant advance in research on political candidates, the LEAP data base (Marschall and Shah 2013). LEAP pools data from local elections across the country, that is, elections below the state level, such as races for county offices, city offices, and special districts (like fire districts and school districts). For my purposes, this sample has two significant advantages. First, local elections are far more numerous than state or national elections – roughly 96% of the half million political offices in the USA are local offices. Moreover, these local elections tend to be far more diverse than state and national elections. If our goal is to learn whether working-class candidates run and win in places where women and minorities run and win, the best elections to study are those where women, minorities, and workers routinely make it onto the ballot.

I focus here on the LEAP data on elections in California between 1995 and 2011. California is ideal for two reasons. First, it is the only state in the LEAP data base that requires candidates for local elections to report their occupations. In most states, it is extremely difficult to obtain

systematic data on local candidates' occupational backgrounds. Most jurisdictions do not require candidates for public office to provide information about their occupational histories. Moreover, many candidates for local office run small campaigns, have limited web presences, and are never covered extensively by the media. Many quickly remove campaign materials from the web after election time. As a result, the availability of data on local candidates' occupations is almost certainly heavily biased in most states (e.g., candidates who are more likely to win, have more resources, or more professional campaign staffs are more likely to have information available about them on the web). California is an important exception: every candidate is required to report their primary occupation when they declare their candidacy. The LEAP data base offers us a rare opportunity to study systematic data on the occupational backgrounds of every local candidate in California – tens of thousands of politicians – a task that would be virtually impossible in other states.⁵

More generally, California is also ideal for the purposes of this study because its political institutions are highly diverse. In 2012, the California state legislature was made up of a quarter women and a third racial or ethnic minorities (i.e., members who did not identify as non-Hispanic whites).

During the 16 years covered by this sample, there were 18,363 elections below the state level in California, and 65,915 candidates ran in them. For each candidate, I first recorded whether his or her stated occupation was a *working-class job*, that is, a manual labor, service industry, clerical, or union job.⁶

Unfortunately, the California LEAP data do not include information about the sex, race, or ethnicity of each candidate. However, LEAP includes each candidate's first and last name. Following a growing body of research (e.g., Butler and Broockman 2011; Fryer and Levitt 2004; Word et al. n.d.), I used each candidate's *first* name to estimate the probability that the candidate was a man, and I used the candidate's *last* name to estimate the probability that the candidate was white/non-Hispanic (since first names tend to be strongly associated with gender but tend not to be clearly divided by race, like last names; e.g., Levitt and Dubner 2005, Chap. 6).⁷ The social class measure that I used, then, was a simple dichotomous variable (0 for white-collar jobs, 1 for working-class jobs), and the race and gender measures I used were probabilities that ranged from 0 to 1 (although because most names tend to be sharply divided by gender or race, most values were close to 0 or 1).

These data provide a clear window into the diversity of local elections in California. The LEAP data set covers three jurisdictions – city-, county-, and school-district-level elections – and three branches – legislative offices (i.e., city councils, county commissions, and school boards), administrative offices, and executive offices. Figure 1 plots the percentages of women (top row), minorities (middle row), and workers (bottom row) in elections in each jurisdiction (left column) and each branch of government (right column). (Table A1 reports more detailed summary statistics.) In each panel, each pair of bars plots the percentage of *candidates* who were, for instance, women, and the percentage of *winners* who were, too.

Viewed this way, the LEAP data already have several important lessons to teach us. First, women and minorities are better represented in local elections in California than working-class candidates. In every level and branch of local government in California, working-class citizens – who make up a majority of the labor force in the USA – make up less than 5% of candidates and less than 3% of officeholders. (These figures are consistent with a longstanding body of research on the near absence of working-class people in political offices; e.g., Carnes 2013a; Matthews 1954a; Pessen 1984). Second, each historically underrepresented group – women, minorities, and workers – fares better in smaller jurisdictions, that is, each group runs more often and wins more often in school district elections than in county races. Third, whereas women tend to win more elections than they lose – they make up a larger percentage of winners than of

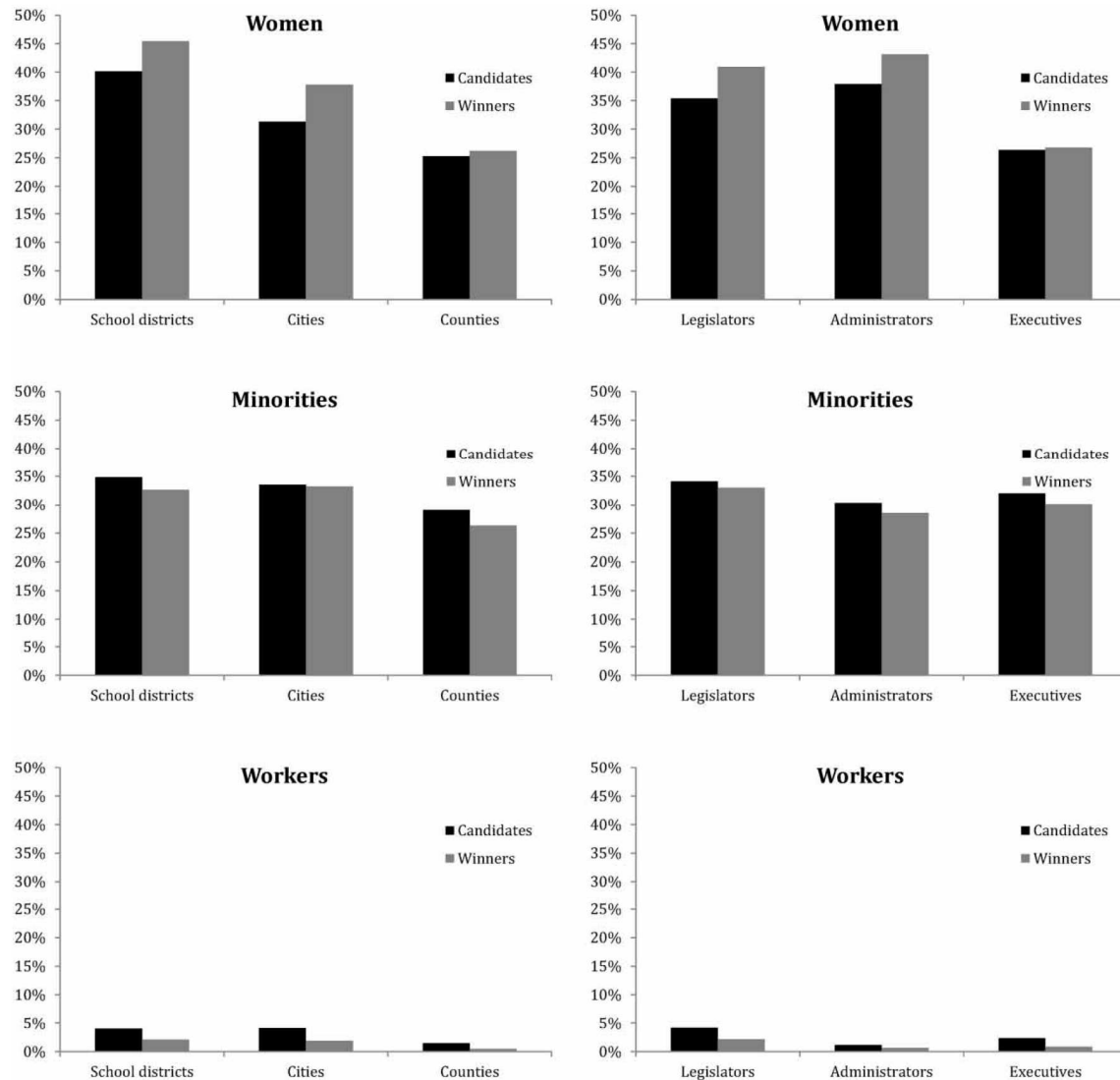


Figure 1. The percentages of women, minorities, and workers in California elections, by jurisdiction (left column) and branch (right column).

Source: LEAP data base (Marshall and Shah 2013).

candidates – racial and ethnic minorities and working-class candidates tend to be screened out in elections at slightly higher rates than whites and white-collar professionals.

Most importantly for present purposes, the large numbers of women and minorities who run for office and win in California already casts doubt on the second condition outlined earlier, namely, that women and minorities have a “type” of election that working-class candidates might encroach on. Women make up 40% of school district candidates and 45% of school district winners; minorities make up 30–35%. At first glance, these numbers seem much larger than we might expect if we believed that there were particular types of elections that favored these groups – say, elections in places where voters are more politically progressive or where women and minorities vote in larger numbers. Of course, there may be types of elections that give women and minorities advantages on the margins (e.g., Trounstein and Valdin 2008). However, the sheer numbers of women and minorities who run and win in California casts doubt on the idea that these groups have hard-and-fast electoral niches. It seems more likely that they do not, that women and minorities can win in many types of elections in California.

How do these data compare to the three conditions described earlier? What can local elections in California teach us about the future of political representation for women, minorities, and the working class?

Condition 1: Are working-class candidates mostly white men?

First, how much do politicians from the “new” group overlap with the existing groups? If blue-collar candidates are mostly white men, their success at the polls could decrease the descriptive representation of women and racial and ethnic minorities.

They are not, however: in local elections in California, white men make up a *minority* of working-class candidates. The left panel of Figure 2 plots the numbers and percentages of working-class candidates who fell into four categories: white men, white women, non-white men (i.e., men who were not white/non-Hispanic), and non-white women. Contrary to popular images of working-class Americans as white men, white men only made up 43% of the working-class candidates in California from 1995 to 2011. Fully 30% of working-class candidates were women – 17% of all working-class candidates were white women and 13% were women of color. Non-white men made up 27% of working-class candidates. For the last decade and a half, white men have made up a minority of working-class candidates.

Moreover, candidates from white-collar jobs were actually *more* likely to be white men than candidates from working-class jobs were. The right panel of Figure 2 plots the racial and gender makeup of candidates from white-collar (i.e., non-working-class) occupations. In sharp contrast to the idea that working-class candidates pose a threat to women and minorities, working-class candidates are *more likely* to be women and minorities themselves.

This finding is squarely in line with what we know about ordinary Americans: men and white people tend to have more prestigious occupations and tend to earn higher incomes than women and minorities (e.g., Bobbitt-Zeher 2007; Goldin 1990; Loury 1977; Smith 1997; Smith and Welch 1986; Wright 1978). The same seems to be true for political candidates: like working-

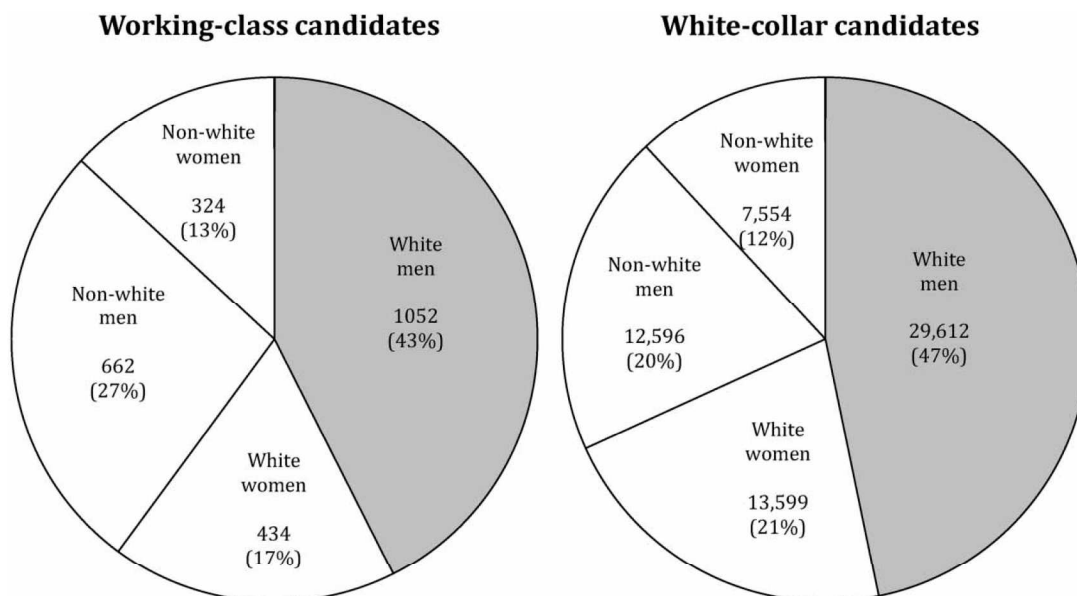


Figure 2. The racial and gender makeup of working-class and white-collar candidates in local elections in California.

Source: LEAP data base (Marschall and Shah 2013).

class Americans, working-class candidates are more likely to be women and racial or ethnic minorities.

Other things equal, increasing the share of candidates and officeholders from the working class would actually *increase* the total share of candidates who were women and minorities. Is working-class representation a threat to women and minorities? It does not seem to be – compared to white-collar government, government by the working class would actually be more diverse along racial and gender lines.

Condition 2: Do white working-class men run in the same elections as women and minorities?

Moreover, the working-class candidates who *are* white men do not seem to run in the same kinds of races as women and minorities. In fact, it is not clear that there *are* particular kinds of local races in California that significantly favor women and minorities.

The LEAP data show essentially no relationship between the number of women or minorities who run for office in a given election and the number of white working-class men who run. Figure 3 uses the California LEAP data to plot the number of candidates who were white working-class men (each point represents a single election) against the number of candidates who were women (left panel) and the number who were racial or ethnic minorities (right panel). There is essentially no relationship in either panel. White working-class men do not flock to the races that draw large numbers of women and minorities, or vice versa. If there *is* a distinct type of local election in California where women or racial and ethnic minorities prefer to run for office, white working-class men are not seeking it out at disproportionate rates.

Nor are they seeking out elections where women and minorities typically *win*. Figure 4 plots the results of a simple regression modeling exercise (reported in its entirety in Table A2). I first regressed the probability that a woman or (separately) a minority was the winner of each *county* election⁸ in the LEAP data set on a variety of characteristics of counties: the percentage of the two-party vote Obama received in that county in 2012, the county's population, the median household income, the unemployment rate, the percentage of residents who were white/non-Hispanic, the median age, the percentage of the county that was urban, and the percentage of the county that was female.⁹ These models allowed me to determine which types of counties were most likely to elect women and minorities (i.e., Do women tend to do better in more heavily Democratic counties?). I then used the resulting model to predict the odds that a woman or a minority would win in each county election based on the characteristics of the county itself, and then plotted that estimate against the share of candidates in each race who were white working-class men. If women or minorities have an electoral niche, and if white working-class men seek it out, it should be evident here.

Figure 4 plots the predicted probability of a female or minority victory in each county election (on the vertical axis) against the proportion of candidates in each race who were white working-class men. Two things are worth noting. First, women and minorities did not seem to have distinct electoral niches in California. Women were slightly more likely to win in counties with lower unemployment rates; minorities were more likely to win in counties that were more urban and where more minorities lived. Overall, however, these characteristics – and the others I controlled for, including Obama's vote share in the 2012 election – did not do much to predict female and minority representation. Most of the coefficients in the regression models underlying these estimates were non-significant, and both models had R^2 estimates under 0.04. In other words, it is difficult to predict whether a woman or a minority will win office in a given county in California based purely on the characteristics of the county. Women and minorities win in rich and poor

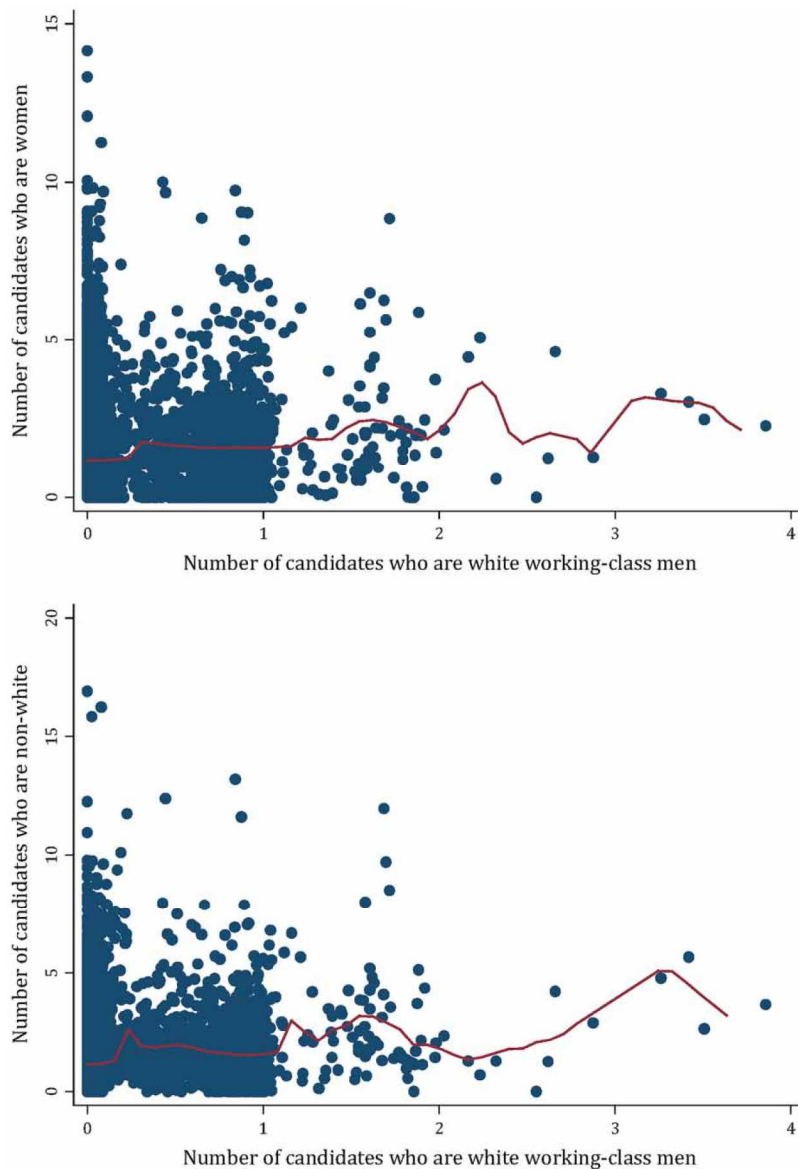


Figure 3. Do white working-class men run in the same elections as women and minorities?
Source: LEAP data base (Marschall and Shah 2013).

counties, in Republican-leaning and Democratic-leaning counties – they do not appear to have a “type” of local election in California.

And if they do, it does not seem to be the type where white working-class men run in large numbers. In the left panel of Figure 4, the relationship between the proportion of candidates who are white working-class men and the likelihood of a minority winning office actually appears weakly negative: if anything, white working-class men tend *not* to run in the places where racial and ethnic minorities tend to win elections.

Likewise, the right panel of Figure 4 finds essentially no relationship between the share of candidates who are white working-class men and the likelihood that a woman will win a county election. White men from the working class do not seem to pose any special threat of running against women and minorities on “their” turf – there does not even seem to be such a thing in local elections in California.

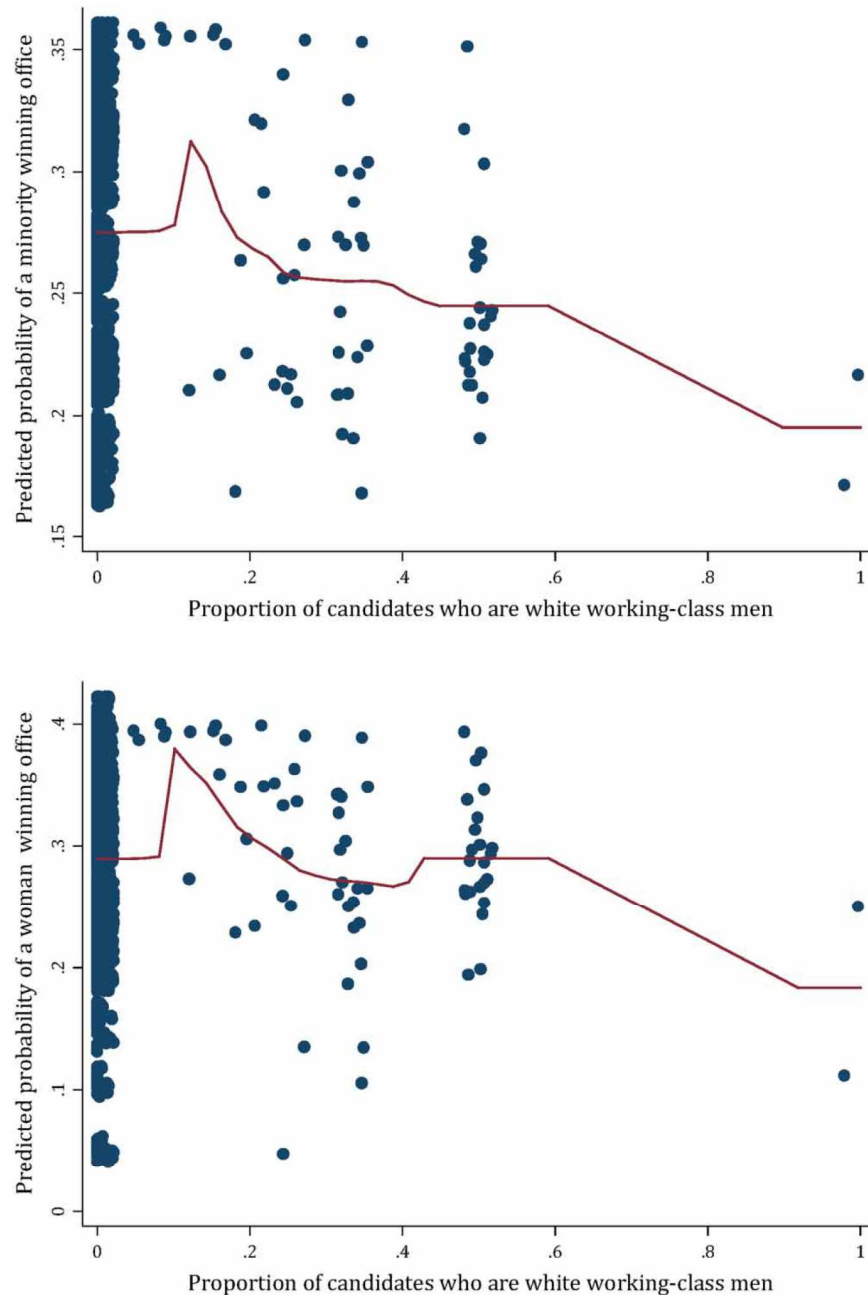


Figure 4. Do white working-class men run where women and minorities win?
Source: LEAP data base (Marschall and Shah 2013).

Condition 3: Are there any elections left for white working-class men?

Even if women and minorities were rare among working-class candidates (although they are not) and even if women and minorities had particular “types” of elections (although they do not seem to) and even if working-class candidates tended to run and win in those types of elections (although they do not seem to, either), there are still many elections where white working-class men could run without displacing women or minorities. I find no evidence to support the third condition outlined above. Politicians from the existing groups *do not* already run and win in almost all of the elections where they stand a chance in California. There is room for more working-class candidates – and more female and minority candidates, too.

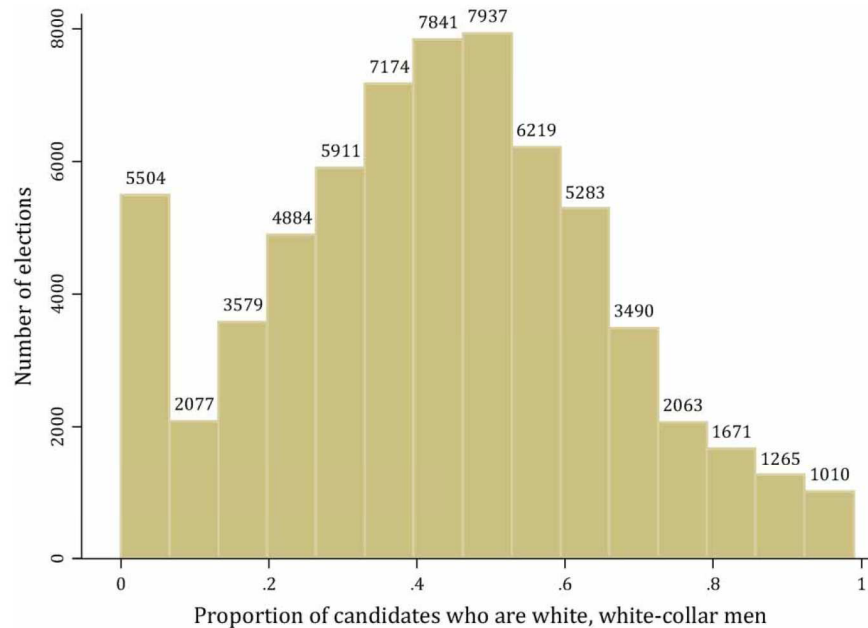


Figure 5. Can white working-class men run without displacing women or minorities?
Source: LEAP data base (Marschall and Shah 2013).

Figure 5 summarizes the numbers of local elections in California in 2012 where white white-collar men made up tiny shares of the candidate pool (farther left on the horizontal axis) and larger shares of the candidate pool (farther right). That is, Figure 5 summarizes the number of races that featured few or no women, minorities, *or* working-class candidates.

Although women and minorities run and win at impressive rates in local elections in California, many elections in the state still feature mostly white-collar white men. In total, there were 18,363 local elections in California from 1995 to 2011. In 3946 (21.5%) of those elections, women, minorities, and the working class made up less than 20% of the candidate pool – in other words, they essentially were not there. The percentage of candidates from the working class could triple – all within this band of elections that currently feature almost all white-collar white men. At least in California, there is still plenty of room at the top.

Does working-class representation crowd out women and minorities?

For the last few decades, the descriptive representation of the working class has declined, and the descriptive representation of women and minorities has been on the rise. Now scholars and reformers are starting to investigate programs to elect more working-class Americans. Would those programs pose a risk of decreasing the gains women and minorities have made in office?

The data presented here suggest that they probably would not. Compared to white-collar candidates, working-class candidates in local elections in California are actually *more* likely to be women and minorities. The white working-class men who run, moreover, do not seem to thrive in the types of elections that women and minorities need to stay in office – there do not even seem to *be* types of elections that women and minorities need to stay in office. At the local level, there are plenty of political offices to go around.

In short, none of the three conditions that should alert us to a potential conflict between the descriptive representation of different social groups are met in the LEAP data on California elections. Working-class representation does not appear to pose any risk of displacing female and minority politicians any time in the immediate future.

Of course, the data I have analyzed in this paper come from just one group of elections in one state. Perhaps the ties between women, minorities, and workers are unusually rosy in local elections in California. Perhaps they are more complex in elections for state and federal offices. Or in elections in other states where women or minorities may have electoral niches. Studying the LEAP data from California's local elections is illuminating, but it is always possible that working-class representation could reduce the descriptive representation of women and minorities in other times and places.

The available data suggest that it is not likely, however. For example, the 2012 National Candidate Study (Broockman et al. 2012) – a national survey of the 10,131 people who ran for the 6015 state legislative seats that were up for election at that time¹⁰ – found that, like local elections in California, only about 3% of the candidates who ran in state legislative elections nationwide in 2012 were from the working class. Of those, 27% identified themselves as racial or ethnic minorities. By comparison, among candidates from white-collar occupations, only 15% identified themselves as racial or ethnic minorities. Women were less common among working-class candidates in this data set: only about 8% of working-class candidates were women, whereas about 29% of white-collar candidates were. However, there was essentially no statistically meaningful (or substantively significant) relationship between the percentage of female candidates in an election and the percentage of working-class men (nor was there any relationship between class and race). In state legislative races nationwide, white working-class candidates do not seem to seek out the elections where women or racial and ethnic minorities run.

Likewise, data on federal politicians suggest that women, minorities, and the working class overlap substantially in national politics. The Congressional Leadership and Social Status (CLASS) data set (Carnes 2013b) includes detailed biographical data on the members of Congress who held office between 1999 and 2008. During that time frame, the average male member of Congress spent about 1% of his pre-congressional career in working-class jobs, while the average female member spent about 3%. The average white member spent an average of 1% of his career in working-class jobs, compared to 3% among the average black or Hispanic member and 5% among the average Asian member. The significant overlap between the working class and other historically underrepresented groups that we see among local candidates in California seems to be present at higher levels in the political process.

Those who care about the descriptive representation of historically underrepresented groups should continue keeping an eye on these relationships, of course. There is no evidence that increasing the descriptive representation of the working class would decrease the representation of women and minorities, but, of course, that could change. Achieving representational equality will be a long and difficult process: it is good to occasionally ask whether the success of one group is occurring at the expense of others.

That does not seem to be the case here – for now, reformers can advocate greater working-class representation without worrying that they are undoing the gains that other important groups have made. Working-class candidates do not seem to pose a threat of crowding out women or minorities. Most of them *are* women or minorities.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1. I define a person as belonging to *the working class* (or having a *blue-collar job*, or as simply a *worker*) if he or she is employed in manual labor jobs (e.g., factory worker), service industry jobs (e.g.,

restaurant server), clerical jobs (e.g., receptionist), or union jobs (e.g., field organizer). Likewise, I define a person as having a white-collar job if he or she is not a part of the working class. Of course, there are other ways to disaggregate occupations (e.g., some people might not classify clerical jobs as “blue-collar”), and other ways to measure class (e.g., education, income, wealth, family background, subjective perceptions of class, etc.). Most modern class analysts agree, however, that any measure of class should be rooted in occupational data, that is, information about how a person earns a living (e.g., Hout, Manza, and Brooks 1995; Weeden and Grusky 2005; Wright 1997). And the distinction between working-class jobs and white-collar jobs seems to be the major class-based dividing line in political opinion in the USA. Research on legislators (Carnes 2012a, 2013a) squares with both intuitions: lawmakers from working-class jobs tend to vote significantly differently from legislators from white-collar jobs; however, legislators with higher net worth, more formal education, or well-to-do parents tend not to behave as differently. There are important differences within the working-class and white-collar categories (e.g., between manual laborers and clerical workers), of course, but the major dividing line is between workers, who tend to support more progressive economic policies, and professionals, who tend to support a more conservative role for government in economic affairs.

2. Of course, political observers have always worried about the sharply tilted economic and social class makeup of our political institutions. Debates about the social class makeup of government date back to the founding (Lewis 1961; Manin 1997).
3. Throughout this paper, I use the terms *racial and ethnic minorities* or simply *minorities* to refer to people who are not what the Census Bureau would classify as “white/non-Hispanic.” Obviously, this coarse terminology glosses over the enormously complex realities of racial and ethnic distinctions in the USA. Unfortunately, this approach is a practical necessity here: the Census data on race and ethnicity that make my analysis possible are too blunt to permit a more nuanced analysis of racial and ethnic identities. However, I hope that future research will examine more fine-grained measures of race and ethnicity than I am able to in this study.
4. These occupation and race/ethnicity estimates are from the National Conference of State Legislatures, <http://www.ncsl.org> (5 January 2011), and the gender estimates are from Equal Representation in Government and Democracy, <http://www.ergd.org/StateLegislatures.htm> (5 January 2011).
5. In the conclusion, I compare my findings using these data from California to findings generated from recent nationwide data on state legislative candidates and members of Congress. California seems to be a useful case to study: national data on state and federal officials point to the same basic conclusions as my analyses of LEAP data from California.
6. I first simply alphabetized the occupations, then read through them and coded them as I went. Along the way, I noted terms that occurred frequently in working-class jobs: technician, mechanic, custodian, worker, postal, crew leader, employee, labor, union, receptionist, secretary, administrative assistant, foreman, operator, equipment, teamster, maintenance, waiter, waitress, server, dish washer, bus boy, cashier, driver, and front desk. After my first pass through the list of occupations, I carried out follow-up searches for these terms to ensure that I had not missed any working-class jobs.
7. I used a simple Bayesian framework to compute the probability that each candidate was male and white/non-Hispanic conditional on having a given name. I obtained data on the distribution of names by gender from the 1990 Census (the most recent year the Census first name file is available); see http://www.census.gov/genealogy/www/data/1990surnames/names_files.html (30 March 2013). And I obtained data on the distribution of names by race and ethnicity from the 2000 Census; see <http://www.census.gov/genealogy/www/data/2000surnames/> (30 March 2013). If a candidate’s first name was not included in the sex files or if a candidate’s last name was not included in the race/ethnicity files, I simply assigned the candidate the national average probability of being male or being white/non-Hispanic.
8. Unfortunately, I could not obtain these data for smaller geographic units.
9. Data on population sizes and the racial makeup of counties were from <http://www.censusscope.org/2010Census/PDFs/RaceEth-Counties.pdf> (1 April 2013). Data on unemployment and age were from <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/county-level-data-sets/unemployment.aspx#.UUPvL7TxePU> (1 April 2013). Data on gender were from <http://www.census.gov/popest/data/counties/asrh/2011/CC-EST2011-agesex.html> (1 April 2013). And data on urbanization were from http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/ua/ualists_layout.html (1 April 2013).
10. The survey achieved a 19% response rate – close to 2000 state legislative candidates completed the survey (see Broockman and Skovron 2013).

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Appendix

Table A1. Summary statistics for Figure 1.

	Schools	Cities	Counties	Leg.	Admin.	Execs.
<i>Candidates</i>						
Women	11,117 (40.2%)	9758 (31.3%)	1407 (25.3%)	19,200 (35.4%)	1387 (37.9%)	1695 (26.4%)
Minorities	9643 (34.9%)	10,443 (33.5%)	1614 (29.0%)	18,527 (34.1%)	1112 (30.4%)	2057 (32.0%)
Workers	1109 (4.0%)	1272 (4.1%)	83 (1.5%)	2268 (4.2%)	43 (1.2%)	153 (2.4%)
<i>Winners</i>						
Women	3315 (45.5%)	3064 (37.8%)	685 (26.2%)	5320 (40.1%)	1053 (43.2%)	689 (26.8%)
Minorities	2379 (32.6%)	2696 (33.2%)	686 (26.3%)	4289 (33.0%)	695 (28.5%)	776 (30.1%)
Workers	154 (2.1%)	152 (1.9%)	12 (0.4%)	280 (2.2%)	16 (0.6%)	22 (0.8%)

Source: LEAP data base (Marschall and Shah 2013).

Note: Cells report the number of candidates from the group in question in the type of election in question (and, in parentheses, the percentage of candidates from that group).

Table A2. Regression models used in Figure 4.

	Probability female wins election	Probability minority wins election
2012 Obama vote	0.14 (0.12)	-0.03 (0.07)
Population	0.06 (0.10)	-0.08 (0.06)
Median household income	-0.12 (0.13)	-0.14 ⁺ (0.08)
Unemployment	-1.50** (0.50)	-0.52 (0.32)
White (non-Hispanic)	0.02 (0.15)	-0.39** (0.10)
Median age	0.19 (0.26)	0.43* (0.17)
Urban	0.07 (0.10)	0.14* (0.06)
Female	0.85 (0.55)	0.07 (0.35)
Intercept	-0.13 (0.28)	0.21 (0.18)
<i>N</i>	1447	1447
<i>R</i> ²	0.031	0.038

Source: LEAP data base (Marschall and Shah 2013).

Note: Cells report coefficients from regression models relating the variables listed at the top of the column to the explanatory variables.

⁺*p* < .10, two tailed**p* < .05, two tailed***p* < .01, two tailed.