BACKSTAGE AT THE CAMPAIGN: THE RACE, GENDER AND EDUCATION OF NATIONAL-LEVEL POLITICAL PROFESSIONALS

Daniel Laurison
University of California, Berkeley[*]

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Professional political operatives are responsible for raising and spending the millions of dollars contemporary national campaigns cost – they create the advertisements voters see on television and the flyers they receive in their mailboxes, craft the speeches voters hear and the phone calls they receive, and determine which voters will be contacted by the campaign in the first place. Although candidates may have final say, the vast majority of things campaigns do are not decided upon and implemented by the candidate for office, but by his her campaign staff and consultants. These "politicos" help shape a candidate's message, her self-presentation, and her daily schedule throughout the campaign. In short, the role professional campaign staffers and consultants play in elections, and thus in who ultimately holds the power of elected offices, is hard to overstate. And yet, while the effects of campaigns have been studied extensively (i.e. Iyengar and Simon, 2000), scholars know remarkably little about the people who create political products; it is as if (to use a type of analogy popular in politics) we were trying to understand professional football through an analysis of the plays, without studying or talking to the players themselves.

Journalistic descriptions of campaign workers indicate that the field of elite politicos is a quintessential "old boys' network" – the top politicos are overwhelmingly white and male, and coveted positions are gained through connections and reputations. Even the historic of Barack Obama featured an "inner circle" of campaign staff and consultants composed primarily of white men[1]. This is not only a problem of another instance of racial and gender inequality in access to high-powered jobs; these are the people whose beliefs about what voters want translate directly into what voters are given during campaigns. If political work at high levels tends to be closed off to women and minorities, this is bound to have an effect on campaign strategies. Conversely, the skills,

[1] http://politicsmagazine.com/magazine-issues/july-2009/political-consulting-in-black-and-white/

knowledge, and modes of action deemed valuable by those making hiring decisions in campaigns will affect both who works on campaigns in the first place and the way they carry out that work.

While a simple perusal of political news makes clear that high-level political professionals are almost all white men, it is not so clear to what extent class background figures in the acquisition or distribution of campaign jobs; some well-known high-level political operatives such as Terry McAuliffe (former head of the DNC) are from working class backgrounds; but while the racial background of campaign staff is sometimes reported, the economic circumstances of politicos' families is rarely included in journalistic accounts of the campaign trail. Understanding the characteristics of elite politicos and the processes of advancement in the field is important not only as an instance of work-world inequality but also as a key factor in American campaigns and elections.

Existing Knowledge

Research on campaigns and their staff and consultants has focused primarily on either studying determinants of campaign outcomes or on the rise of political consulting. While the relationships between race, class, gender and political participation have been studied extensively (e.g. Piven & Cloward 1988 and 2000, Verba Schlozman Brady 1995 and many others), when most scholars turn their attention to campaigns themselves, race, gender, and class analyses largely disappear. There are remarkably few studies of campaign decision makers' views of the electorate and the political process, and none analyzing the ways politicos enter and advance in this career.

The story of the decline of parties in American politics (e.g. Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; Wattenberg 1998; Crotty and Jacobson 1980) is one approach to the analysis of campaign staffers. The decline has to do with what Skocpol (2003) termed the shift "from membership to

management": through the beginning of the 20th century, a substantial portion of citizens belonged to civic associations which, rather than being legally cut off from the world of governmental affairs or political contests, actively participated (Skocpol 2003). Around the same time, political parties were the primary mobilizing force during campaigns – they maintained connections between local, state, and national politics and candidates, on the one hand, and citizens on the other, and served to channel communication between communities and their elected officials (Rosenbloom 1973). Since that time, membership in these types of groups and party organizations has declined, as have rates of civic engagement and political participation. Skocpol (2003) attributes this, at least in part, to the "professionalization" of politics – the shift from associational organizations to professionally staffed ones – in every aspect of politics from issue advocacy to party organization to "grassroots fundraising" (see also Fisher 2006). Political scientists have been concerned since the 1970s with one particular aspect of the professionalization of politics: the rise of political consultants, i.e., campaign professionals not tied to a particular candidate or party infrastructure.

Political party scholars argue that the "candidate-centered" campaign and candidate-centered politics have replaced the party-run campaign (e.g. Katz and Mair 1995). Today, political campaigns are run by campaign organizations established for that purpose rather than by political parties; the national parties, while still collecting and distributing vast sums of money, providing services to candidates, and sending field organizers into the states, do not (by and large) work to connect the mass of individual voters to their candidates and elected officials. Campaigns are no longer made up primarily of dedicated citizen-members of parties, combined with party staffers and officers. Instead, they are run by professional campaigners, whether those are incumbents' staff, party staff, consultants, or people who move in and out of various roles in politics. Volunteers still participate,

but they are generally recruited only for that campaign, and their participation – and organization – ends the day after the election[2].

A number of studies have addressed the role of paid political consultants in campaigns. Rosenbloom (1973), Sabato (1981) and then a host of others (e.g. Medvic 2003, Mancini 1999) argued that consultants were responsible not only for the ostensible decline in the two major parties' role in elections, but also for increases in campaign spending and negative advertising. Later scholars (e.g.Farrell and Webb 2000) however, attribute these changes primarily to the twin forces of population and technology – as there were more and more people to mobilize on election day, and as radio and then television became effective means of mass communication, parties shifted their focus from direct voter contact to use of the mass media.

Dulio (2004) explicitly argues against holding consultants responsible for these changes, and provides the most comprehensive studies to date of consultants and campaign staffs (Dulio and Nelson 2005). Consultants are disproportionately white and male when compared with the public as a whole, although they are demographically quite similar to the candidates for office for whom they work. It is true that consultants have played a rapidly increasing role in campaigns since the 1960s, and unlike the party operatives who previously did the lion's share of decision-making in campaigns, they work for multiple candidates in most cycles, in many locations (Rosenbloom 1973, Sabato 1984, Mancini 1999). But it seems consultants may not be that different from their predecessors, at least in their reported motivations: they report party loyalties and ideology as among their top motivations for participating in politics, rather than monetary gain as many scholars had feared. Dulio's surveys found that consultants (like party officials) have a fairly high degree of trust in the

[2] Obama's campaign organization has reversed this trend by becoming a stand-alone organization (Organizing for America) that operates with paid organizers in every state and some channels for communication both top-down and bottom-up.

public to make good decisions on election day – more trust, in fact, than the average voter has in his/her fellow citizens.

Elections are the time when most people pay attention to politics, politicians, and the entire institution of representative democracy. They are also the moments when politicians and their staffs are most actively reaching out to the prospective voters in the populace. Almost all day-to-day decisions in campaigns are made by the campaign staff (Dulio 2005), and even many of the longer-range strategic decisions are made by political staffers and consultants rather than candidates themselves.

Problems with Existing Knowledge

It is surprising that the people who make up the institutions of politics have not yet been studied closely. The work of Skocpol and Rosenbloom, among others, does indicate the professionalization of politics as a source of problems, but their analyses stop at pointing out this structural shift, without closely examining the people who make up these structures.

One major weakness in studies of campaigns and campaigning is their focus on consultants as a special class of participant in campaigns. This research suggests that this is largely an artificial distinction; some of the people working on a given campaign may have consulting businesses, yet be deeply tied to a particular candidate and work on no other races in that cycle; other "consultants" may be essentially vendors providing a service with no decision-making role in the campaign; and some key decision-makers on campaigns are not consultants at all, and so have been completely ignored by studies which treat "political professional" as synonymous with "campaign consultant." This study, then, examines both the universe of staffers working on national-level campaigns and the overlapping but by no means identical universe of partners and employees of consulting shops with national-level clients, all in the 2007-2008 cycle.

Another component lacking in the extant literature on campaigns and campaign staff is an analysis of the ways people enter and advance in the field of politics. While the backgrounds and demographic attributes of Congress are analyzed in great detail, very little is known about the trajectories of the people who run their campaigns.

Pierre Bourdieu provides a rich analytical framework that can help understand the dynamics at work in the political field. *Field*, *capital*s, *habitus*, and *social space* are conceptual tools that bring together the subjective and the structural aspects of social reality. His work was largely based on observations of French politics and interviews with French citizens; with a few exceptions (Herbst 1992; Swartz 2006; L. Wacquant 2004; Wacquant and Bourdieu 2005), his theoretical approach has not been applied to the analysis of politics in the United States. I will offer a brief review of the relevant elements of Bourdieu's work here. In the next section, I articulate the hypotheses I draw from his work which will be tested by this dissertation research.

For Bourdieu, politics can best be understood as a *field of symbolic production*,[3] similar in some ways to the fields of literary or artistic production, as well as to the religious and academic fields. For a product or a claim to be considered truly political (or literary, or academic, or religious) and for it to have effects within the field, it must be created by someone recognized as "competent" by the standards of the field. Field analysis requires researchers to consider the positions and trajectories of the people with power inside the field, the location of the field within the field of power, and the relation of the field to the rest of social space. In any field, struggles within the field as well as the classed trajectories of the dominant actors in the field are likely to be important in determining the particular products developed by producers in that field.

The "players" in the political field are various kinds of political professionals: politicians, campaign and office staff, pundits, political action committees, party staffs, political scientists,

[3] See especially Bourdieu, 1993: "Political Representation: Elements for a Theory of the Political Field." Pp. 171-202 in *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

political reporters and others whose professional lives center around politics. Much of Bourdieu's analyses (1993; 1984; 1999) centered on elected officials and the state rather than campaign staffs; although the context is different, the same basic dynamics should apply to campaigns and campaign professionals. He argued that although elected officials' continued power rests ultimately on winning elections, their ability to do so and their relative power (as well as the power of non-elected political professionals) have at least as much to do with the outcomes of struggles within the field as they do with the will of the voters. These struggles may be over particular positions, policy stances, legitimacy or the legitimate means of conferring legitimacy, or for the favor of particular donors or power brokers, but whatever the content of these struggles they are usually not transparent to those outside the field. When political professionals create the political objects available to citizens – party positions, speeches, commercials, and so on – they bring their positions in within-field struggles to the process along with their knowledge and beliefs about effective strategies for mobilizing voters.

For Bourdieu, there are four primary types of *capital*: economic, social, cultural and symbolic. Capital in general is "accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated,' embodied form)" which can be traded for some benefit or advantage (2001: 241). Bourdieu's work seeks to show the ways tastes, mannerisms, connections, possessions, authority, ease, and other things that are often seen merely as personal attributes can function as capital because they are based on accrued labor and work to confer advantages on some and reproduce social inequalities. In Bourdieu's framework, economic capital is income and wealth; social capital is productive ties with social groups or other individuals; and symbolic capital is the ability to bestow interactions with legitimacy or official sanction. Quantities and distributions of capital will impact the influence an agent or group of agents is able to wield in the political field.

Along with "field," *cultural capital* is one of the most important concepts for studying politics. It takes the form of both explicitly understood knowledge and less conscious tastes, beliefs, and

dispositions that work to their holder's advantage. Those with more cultural capital are more likely to relate to art, literature, academia and politics, and other fields of legitimate cultural production, in the terms used by those inside those fields, rather than through other categories of perception. The distribution of capitals in turn defines the axes of *social space*, and this topography of "class" differences corresponds in large part to political differences.

Habitus, finally, is Bourdieu's term for all the non-conscious ways individuals from particular locations in – and trajectories through – social space engage with and make sense of the world around them. What is essential in thinking about human action through the concept of habitus is that it forces one to see how much social action and perception is non-conscious and informed by an agent's history and current position. Agents with different volumes and structures of capital and different trajectories will see the same cultural object (i.e. a piece of art) or social opportunity (a party, a job opening) in very different ways, and the differences in the categories they use to understand these things are part of what generates differences in their feelings about them and their actions and reactions with regards to specific pieces of art, parties, or job openings. Habitus is not a fixed attribute but can evolve and change, and is shaped in adulthood largely through the work world. This is not to say, though, that habitus is completely flexible; some entrants into the field of politics will have backgrounds which equip them with a habitus more readily adaptable to the vicissitudes of political work; others, for whom the work may appeal in theory, will find it distasteful or find that they are ill-suited to it. In Bourdieu's own words:

> Indeed, nothing is less natural than the mode of thought and action demanded by participation in the political field; like the religious, artistic or scientific habitus, the habitus of the politician depends on a special training. […] But it is also and above all that sort of initiation, with its ordeals and rites of passage, which tends to inculcate the practical mastery of the immanent logic of the political field and to impose a de facto submission to the values, hierarchies and censorship mechanisms inherent in this field, or in the specific form that the constraints and control mechanisms of the field assume within each political party.
>
> […] to gain a complete understanding of the political discourses that are on offer in the market at a given moment […], we would have to analyze the entire process of production

> of the professionals of ideological production, starting with the way they are marked out, according to the frequently implicit definition of the desired competence, which designates them for these functions, then considering the general or specific education which prepares them to assume these functions, and finally examining the action of continuous normalization imposed on them, with their own complicity, by the older members of their group […]
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> *Page 176, "Political Representation – Elements for a Theory of the Political Field," in Language and Symbolic Power, 1991.*

The question for this project put in Bourdieu's terms, then, is how the *doxa* (taken-for-granted beliefs and knowledge), structure, and struggles for position within the political field structure the advancement of at the elite levels, and thus impact political products – the objects, experiences, and messages confronting potential voters. According to Bourdieu's field theory, agents in a field struggle for position with rules specific to that field, using capitals some of which are valuable only in that field (political capital, in this case) and some of which are more generally exchangeable (cultural capital broadly).

Bourdieu's theoretical and empirical description of political dynamics in France and the extant literature on American political campaigns suggest that there are a multitude of ways that politicians, pundits, and political professionals reproduce the gender, racial and economic makeup of their field, and that this is bound to have important effects on the politics they create.

Data and Methods

National campaigns – especially presidential campaigns – draw more attention and participation than any other aspect of American politics. This project thus concentrates on the people who produce national politics – campaign staff and consultants to Presidential and contested Senate races, as well as consultants who have a national clientele of Congressional races. The data presented here describe only staffers on the two general election campaigns of 2008, plus all staff in consulting firms with House of Representatives clients in multiple states, and/or Senate or

Presidential campaign clients. Eventually, the project will include a dataset including every full-time staffer or consultant involved in any strategic decision-making capacity in the national 2004, 2006, and 2008 elections, including the primary and general Presidential campaigns, contested Senate races, and the national party committees, plus all national political consulting firms. Using Federal Election Commission filings, news clippings, and websites dedicated to tracking political staffers and expenditures[4], the database includes socio-demographic information, education (both highest degree achieved and names of schools attended and types of degrees granted), position(s) within the 2003-2004, 2005-2006, and 2007-2008 campaigns, length of tenure on the campaign, post-campaign work, previous work in politics, and any other jobs held, as well as subjects' race, gender and age. To my knowledge, this is the first comprehensive descriptive statistical picture of the universe of national campaign staff and consultants.

Everything in the database is public information found on the internet. To analyze campaign staffers, a team of research assistants and I began by copying information from a website hosted by George Washington University which lists campaign staff positions and biographies for all presidential campaigns for 2004 and 2008[5]. We transformed these into spreadsheets, then searched the internet for confirmation of the GWU source as well as for information about each individual beyond that listed at the GWU site. The database now contains nearly 3000 records; when it is complete, the number should approach 10,000. This paper looks only at the three parts of the database that played roles in the 2008 general election – the McCain and Obama campaigns and the universe of consultants with national clients, nearly 800 cases.

There are, of course, drawbacks to using publicly available information: primarily, the rate of missing data is quite high. Of the 797 cases analyzed in this paper, fewer than 400 have been linked

[4] Including the Democracy in Action project at notably Democracy in Action at George Washington University (http://www.gwu.edu/%7Eaction/2008/about.html) and www.opensecrets.org.

[5] http://www.gwu.edu/~action/2008/cands08txt.html; http://www.gwu.edu/~action/2008/mccain/mccainorg.html; http://www.gwu.edu/~action/2008/obama/obamaorg.html, etc.

to a racial identification, 250 are missing data on gender, and 409 do not include any educational information. This much non-response is clearly not ideal, especially if there is an unanalyzed systematic bias in the data. The missing data on campaign professionals is clearly biased, but in a direction which largely helps the analysis: the higher the profile of an individual's campaign work, the easier it is to find information about him or her. Since the focus of this study is on elite campaign workers, this bias is not much of a hindrance to analysis, though it does bear keeping in mind.

Campaign staff positions were coded as to their level in the campaign hierarchy (an 18 point scale, collapsed to 4 major categories for this analysis) and their campaign department or specialty (15 categories, collapsed to 11 for this analysis). Because most articles and biographies do not make mention of race, especially when the subject is white, race was most often coded phenotypically from photos available online. Gender was coded based on subjects' names and pronouns used about them in articles. Race and gender are left missing in the database if no information can be found or if the photo or name can not be unambiguously coded. Coding race phenotypically is of course somewhat problematic; my research assistants were understandably reluctant to make guesses based on photographs. However, it is the best option available with the resources at hand; a follow-up study may conduct online surveys of political professionals where they can self-identify; it will be interesting to see how well our visual categorizations match up with self-identifications.

To collect information on campaign consultants, we used *Campaigns & Elections* magazine's listing of the win/loss record of consulting firms, and then looked up each of those firms' websites and collected the biographies of their partners and staff. Firms were only included if their clientele included at least one Senate or Presidential race, or at least three House of Representatives races in at least two different states, or which were hired by party committees through "independent expenditures." This part of the final database has a more even distribution of missing data within

records, as biographies posted on political consulting firms' websites tend to have similar degrees of content detail for all levels of staff at the firm. There is, however, again a bias towards including only those in the higher echelons of the profession, as not all firms include biographies of their lower-level staff.

Consultants were coded into three categories – founders/partners, senior associates and directors, and junior associates and production staff – based on their titles. They were also coded according to the type of service their firm offers, a coding scheme which parallels, though is not identical with, the scheme for departments within campaigns. Finally, we tallied, the total number of races their firm handled in 2008 and the highest level campaign their firm worked on (Presidential, Senate, or Congressional).

To code the educational institutions political professionals attended, I used a dataset provided to me by Steven Brint at UC Riverside and his Colleges and Universities 2000 project. Every college and university in the United States is associated with its many of its institutional characteristics, including its score on Barron's selectivity index. While Barron's normally ranks 1 as most selective and 7 as least, the scores are inverted in the dataset and in the tables for easier interpretation.

Results – *Distribution of Campaign Staff and Consultant positions.*

The approximately 800 political professionals in this section of the database are not necessarily representative of the universe of political professionals as a whole, but they do represent the majority of people working in the national headquarters of both the 2008 general election campaigns, and all identifiable consultants working for firms with clients in national races in 2008. That said, there is no reason to expect the exact distribution within departments and among campaign level and consultant types to hold through other elections; I do, however, expect that the

broad patterns of racial, gender, and educational stratification identified among those working on national campaigns in 2008 were in place in 2004 and would be found to some extent in Presidential primary campaigns and competitive Senate races as well.

For descriptive purposes, then, here is the composition of the 800 people analyzed here, divided between Campaign Staff and Consultants more for convenience since the categorizations are not identical than because there are necessarily theoretically interesting differences between the two groups.

Campaign Staff Department	N	%
General/Strategic	78	16.39
Political/Outreach	93	19.54
Communications/Press	90	18.91
Trips/Advance/Scheduling	24	5.04
New Media/Internet	38	7.98
Finance	36	7.56
Policy	24	5.04
Field	44	9.24
Chairs, Honorary Positions	19	3.99
Operations	11	2.31
Other departments/titles	19	3.99
Total	476	100

Other departments include volunteer management, database management, etc. The categorization of Staff Levels does not include all the lower-level staff, as they were under-represented in the data I have available and were too heterogeneous to yield any interesting analyses. They are included in categorizations by department, though.

Campaign Staff level	N	%
Campaign Managers and Heads of National Departments	93	25.55
Deputy Directors in National Departments and Equivalents	118	32.42
Lower level staff in National Departments	119	32.69
Directors of Competitive/Early Primary States and Regions	34	9.34
Total	364	100

Consultants are grouped into only three levels, which captures most of the variation in their staff titles.

Consultant Levels	N	%
Partner, President, Founder	170	52.96
Senior Associates, Directors	103	32.09
Jr. Associates, Analysts, etc.	48	14.95
Total	321	100

They are categorized also by the types of services their firm provides; some may not actually engage in all the types of work their firm does, but most firms specialize in only a few kinds of services.

Consultant Type	N
Media/Press	101
General	89
Direct Mail	81
Polling	62
Online Services (web development, text messaging, email marketing, internet…)	46
Voter contact (mostly telemarketing)	29
Fundraising	19
Research & Issues	29
Field	10
Technical Services (Compliance, Graphic Design, Technology)	6
Total (some consultants have multiple specialties; this is ALL consultants, not sum or average of above)	*358*

Consultants also vary according to the number of races their firm handles and the type:

number of campaigns	number of firms with that many campaigns	cumulative % of firms with that many campaigns
1	13	3.63
2	40	14.8
3	20	20.39
4	44	32.68
5	27	40.22
6	32	49.16
7 to 9	23	55.59
10 to 12	41	63.13
13 to 19	53	81.84
20 - 29	39	92.74
30 or more (up to 79)	26	100

Highest Race served by Firm	N	%
President	125	34.92
Senate	126	35.2
House of Representatives	107	29.89
Total	358	100

Results - *Race and Gender makeup*

The data show clearly the ways that the backgrounds of campaign professionals differ from those of the working public in general; in fact, they are more similar to members of congress and other elite professions than to the population at large.

Political professionals on the whole are more likely to be white than the civilian workforce at large.

Table 1

	N	Campaign Staff (N=174)	Consultants (n=197)	All Political Professionals (n=371)	civilian labor force[6]
White	308	74%	91%	83%	74%
Black	27	13%	3%	7%	11%
Latino/a	15	7%	1%	4%	11%
Asian-American	15	5%	4%	4%	4%
Native American/Other	4	1%	2%	2%	1%
Total	371	100%	100%	100%	100%

The over-representation of whites among political professionals is driven entirely by the overwhelming whiteness of the political consultants. Both groups, however, are disproportionately male, and about evenly so.

[6] Data from 2000 Census tables, reported in Chambliss, Elizabeth. 2007. *Miles to Go: Progress of Minorities in the Legal Profession.* New York State Bar Association Committee on Minorities in the Profession.

Table 2

gender	N	Campaign Staff (N=210)	Consultants (N=336)	Total
Female	141	27%	25%	26%
Male	405	73%	75%	74%
Total	546	100%	100%	100%

Racial disparities show up among campaign staff, and both racial and gender disparities become more pronounced, however, when each group is broken up by position in the occupational hierarchy.

Table 3

Campaign Level – Campaign Staff	N	% Male	%White
1 (Campaign Managers, National Directors)	93	73%	83%
2 (Deputy Directors, other higher-level national staff)	118	74%	86%
3 (Lower-level National staff)	119	66%	65%
4 (Regional and State Directors)	34	70%	68%

Table 3 shows that while whites are not over-represented among campaign staff as a whole when compared with the civilian labor force, they are over-represented among the top ranks of campaign staff. The first category includes campaign managers, senior advisors, and anyone whose title was "Director of X" or "X Director" where X was a major campaign department. Deputy Directors of major departments and Directors of sub-departments are included in category 2, and all other national staff are included in category 3. For example, Political Directors, Field Directors, and Communications Directors are ranked as 2, but Directors of New Media, who generally work within communications departments, are ranked 3. Ranks 1, 2 and 3 form a proper hierarchy; everyone in category 3 has at least 2 levels of bosses above them, everyone in category 2 as at least one level above them, etc. Category 4 does not fit quite as neatly into the hierarchy; it includes State Directors for key primary states as well as Regional Directors (of multiple states), and many of these people probably fit into the campaign hierarchy above level 3. Still, Table 3 paints a clear picture of racial and gender hierarchy within campaigns.

The same can be seen among the ranks of political consultants. As Table 4 shows, while every rank of consultants is disproportionately white and male, the farther one goes up the hierarchy, the starker the differences.

Table 4.

	%White	%Male
1 (Partner, President, Founder)	94%	86%
2 (Senior Associates, Directors)	89%	65%
3 (Jr. Associates, Analysts, etc.)	84%	58%

Or, put another way, if one is white and male one has a far greater chance of founding or becoming a partner in a political consulting firm than if one is female or of color. As one might expect, the Republican party's political professionals are composed of a much higher percentage of whites and men than the Democratic party's.

Table 5.

Party	%Male	%White
Democrat	68%	75%
Republican	81%	91%
Independent/Neutral	90%	100%

Overall, political consultants have a higher over-representation of whites (or a worse under-representation of people of color) than CEOs, Lawyers, or Congress as a whole; campaign staff as a group are more or less representative of the civilian workforce as a whole (at least among general election campaigns in 2008), although the top ranks look more like other elite professions[7].

[7] I have not yet compiled comparison data for women in the professions.

Table 6.

	%African American	%Hispanic/ Latino	%Asian American	%Native American	% total POC	%White
Political Consultants	*2.5*	*1.0*	*3.6*	*2.0*	*9.1*	*90.9*
Chief Executives	2.3	3.1	3.8	0.3	9.5	90.5
Lawyers	3.9	3.3	2.3	0.2	9.7	90.3
Congress	*7.8*	*4.6*	*1.9*	*0.2*	*14.4*	*85.6*
Architects	2.7	5.6	6.3	0.3	14.9	85.1
Top Tier Campaign Staff	*9.6*	*4.1*	*1.4*	*0.0*	*15.1*	*84.9*
Dentists	3.3	3.6	8.8	0.2	15.9	84.1
Clergy	8.3	4.2	3.3	0.4	16.2	83.8
Civil Engineers	3.5	4.3	8.5	0.4	16.7	83.3
Economists	5.6	5.1	9.1	0.5	20.3	79.7
Accountants/Auditors	7.9	5.1	7.4	0.4	20.8	79.2
Computer Scientists	7.8	4.7	10.3	0.3	23.1	76.9
Civilian Labor Force	10.5	10.7	3.6	0.7	25.5	74.5
Campaign Staff, all	*12.6*	*7.5*	*4.6*	*1.2*	*25.9*	*74.1*

Source for all professions other than political professionals is Chambliss, ibid. Source for Congress is http://www.congress.org/congressorg/directory/demographics.tt?catid=all.

Women campaign staffers and staffers of color are not only under-represented in the top ranks of campaigns in general; they are also clustered within particular campaign departments.

Table 7.

Campaign Department	Freq.	%Male	%White
Trips/Advance/Scheduling	8	71%	100%
Chairs, Honorary Positions	12	100%	100%
Other	8	50%	100%
Communications/Press	49	64%	97%
New Media/Internet	25	79%	82%
General/Strategic	29	79%	81%
Policy	15	77%	75%
Finance	21	44%	71%
Operations	3	67%	67%
Field	8	63%	63%
Political/Constituencies/Outreach	60	84%	43%
Total	238	0.728571	0.7413793

Table 7 belies impression given by the undifferentiated statistics, that campaign staffers as a whole are more racially diverse than political consultants. The majority of people of color are silo-ed in

political departments and constituency/outreach positions. These are the positions charged with securing the support of various constituency groups; many of the positions have titles such as "Director of African-American Outreach." 28 of the 50 people of color in this dataset have such a position, which, however well-intentioned or necessary it is, is the very definition of "token." This is the same phenomenon observed by Collins (1993) – that Blacks in apparently elite positions are often in "affirmative action" positions, subject to the vicissitudes of racial politics.

If political/constituency/outreach positions are excluded, the percentages of people of color working as campaign staff and as consultants are nearly identical – 88% of campaign staff outside political departments are white, and 90% of consultants are white. There are only four other departments where racial minorities are not under-represented: field, the least-glamorous portion of any campaign; operations and finance, where the work is more technical and administrative rather than being politically specialized; and policy which, like political/constituency departments, relies for its legitimacy upon some degree of representativeness of its advisors and staff. (Titles in Policy departments often include things like "Advisor for Immigration/Latin/o Affairs.")[8] Women are the majority only in the relatively non-political work of Finance departments, and aside from that are most present primarily in Field and Operations, other lower-status, less-political, and more racially-diverse departments. Women are also relatively likely to be found working in Communications, which has almost no people of color.

Results – Educational Background

Although many of the people I have interviewed who work in campaigns believe that "anyone" can enter their line of work simply by volunteering for a campaign and showing

[8] Although this part of my analysis is not yet complete, initial reviews of interviews and career data indicate that there is not much movement into and out of the sub-specialties within political campaigns. One informant told me, for example, that after one successful job in a fundraising department, he felt he had to turn down all offers for further work in fundraising if he ever wanted to work in another aspect of campaigns (which he did).

themselves to be a good worker, the racial and gender composition of the field, and of departments within political campaigns, call this assumption into question; the educational background data below shatters it. Unlike most other professions, there is no formal educational prerequisite for entry into the field of campaign work. There are professional training programs and a professional association of political consultants (along with a few trade magazines and a glut of conferences) but there is no central certifying body or clear pathway into this kind of work. However, there are striking patterns to the educational backgrounds of political professionals.

Table 9

highest degree	N	Campaign Staff	Consultants	Both Groups	US over 25[9]	111th Congress[10]
HS or less	1	1%	0%	0%	45%	5%
some college or AA degree	3	2%	0%	1%	26%	1%
4-year degree	246	60%	66%	63%	19%	25%
M.A. or similar	66	14%	19%	17%	7%	19%
professional degrees, total	55	20%	10%	14%	2%	46%
J.D. (subset of professional degrees)	45	18%	7%	12%		42%
Ph.D.	17	4%	5%	4%	1%	4%
Total	388	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

While, according to the March 2004 Current Population Survey, only 31% of US residents over 25 have a college degree or more education, nearly 100% of political professionals whose education could be found have at least a 4-year college degree. Further, 37% have advanced degrees, as compared with only 10% of the US population. Up to that point, campaign staff and political

[9] Source for US population statistics is March 2004 Current Population Survey data.
[10] Source for Congress is Manning, Jennifer "Membership of the 111th Congress: A Profile." Available at http://www.senate.gov/CRSReports/crs-publish.cfm?pid=%260BL)PL%3B%3D%0A

professionals are broadly similar in their levels of educational achievement. Campaign staff, however, are far more likely than consultants to hold professional degrees, especially J.D.s.

Attending college confers all sorts of advantages on the job market, as does attending graduate school, of course. It is clear from these statistics that, far from being wide open to all entrants, political work of these types essentially requires a college degree. Politicos are not only more educated than the public at large, they are somewhat more likely than members of the current congress to have at least a B.A. or the equivalent; there are, however, substantially fewer who hold J.D.s.

Political professionals not only have more education by far than Americans at large; their undergraduate educations are also far more likely to have taken place at elite, highly selective institutions.

Table 10.

Barron's score	campaign staff	political consultants	% political professionals overall	% of those attending college in 2001
1	0%	0%	0	1%
2	2%	3%	3%	8%
3	4%	7%	6%	14%
4	14%	13%	14%	40%
5	14%	30%	21%	22%
6	22%	21%	22%	10%
7	43%	26%	36%	4%

Barron's ranks colleges and universities' selectivity; only 45 colleges and universities qualify for their "most selective" ranking (scored here as 7). Only four percent of all students attending college in 2001 were enrolled in one of these most-selective educational institutions, yet one in three political professionals in my dataset attended one of these colleges. Further, 62 of the 113 political professionals whose educational institution was known went to "Ivy League" schools - 19 went to Harvard, 11 each to Yale and Brown, and an additional 21 went to other Ivies (Columbia, Cornell,

Dartmouth, Princeton, Stanford or Penn). Fifty-eight percent of political professionals in the data attended schools scored 6 or 7.

The selectivity of one's undergraduate institution can be understood as an indicator or cause of a variety of possible advantages: having the cultural and economic capital in one's family to attend in the first place; the cultural and symbolic capital gained through the educational experience and the possession of the degree, and the social capital gained through alumni networks and informal connections with other students. I do not have enough data yet to disambiguate these various effects, but comparing the average Barron's scores and percentage with graduate degrees within different parts of the political campaign field can shed some light on the ways educational backgrounds matter here.

Table 11.

	% grad degree	Avg. Barron's Score
Operations	100%	7.00
Policy	100%	6.10
Chairs, Honorary Positions	56%	6.67
Political/Constituencies/Outreach	50%	5.35
Field	33%	(no data)
Finance	33%	5.86
General/Strategic	30%	5.62
Other	29%	6.25
Communications/Press	24%	5.67
Trips/Advance/Scheduling	14%	6.50
New Media/Internet	10%	6.00
Total	38%	5.79

This table reveals an interesting pattern – the departments with the highest proportion of incumbents with graduate degrees are also the departments with the highest proportions of people of color.

Table 12.

	% Grad Degree	Avg. Barron's Score
White	35%	5.52
Black	67%	4.94
Latino/a	45%	4.80
Asian-American	31%	6.13
Native American/Other	33%	5.00
Total	38%	5.47

A far higher proportion of people of color – especially Blacks and Latinos – have graduate degrees than do whites, while the selectivity of their colleges, while still substantially higher than average, is generally lower than that of whites. Among whites, there is a small positive correlation (about .15) between undergraduate Barron's score and level of education, but among Blacks, the correlation is negative and larger (-.18). It may be that in order to overcome the disadvantage of being both black and from a less-prestigious undergraduate institution, African-Americans wishing to gain entry to political campaign work seek graduate degrees. This corresponds by Wilson et al's (1999) finding that African-Americans have different paths into elite occupations, and specifically tend to require greater amounts of what they call "human capital" – including education – than whites attaining similar positions. Of course it is not possible to tell from this data whether those degrees were sought specifically to gain entry to this kind of work; regardless, there seems to be a higher bar for entry for blacks with less-prestigious educations.

In terms of campaign position levels rather than departments, higher Barron's scores appears to be directly correlated with higher positions in the hierarchy, while the relationship with degrees is less straightforward.

Table 13.

	%grad degree	Avg. Barron's
Campaign Managers, National Directors	38%	6.36
Deputy Directors, other higher-level national staff	45%	5.75
lower-level national staff	26%	5.67
Regional and State Directors	27%	4.86
Total	34%	5.74

It appears attending a selective college is associated with attaining a high-level position on a political campaign (and those with lower-level positions attended, on average, less selective institutions). Lower level national staff and Regional and State Directors have fewer graduate degrees than staff higher in the hierarchy, but Deputy Directors et al have more graduate degrees than campaign managers and national directors. This could imply that it is the symbolic and/or social capital conferred by one's undergraduate institution, rather than the specific or general knowledge gained in graduate school that grants access to the most-influential positions within political work.

The association between ranks and Barron's scores is much weaker, though still apparent, among consultants.

Table 14.

	%grad degree	Avg. Barron's
Partner, President, Founder	26%	5.5
Senior Associates, Directors	38%	5.2
Jr. Associates, Analysts, etc.	9%	5.2
Total	34%	5.4

The data also show the relationship between party and education, with the Democrats by and large having more education and attending more selective undergraduate institutions.

Table 15.

party	%Graduate Degree	Avg. Barron's
Democrat	40%	5.70
Republican	30%	5.36
Independent/Neutral	38%	6.17
Total	36%	5.56

Discussion

This first pass at analysis of data on the race, gender, and educational background of the political professionals who run Presidential, Senate and multiple House races has shown a number of things. First, the field is as disproportionately white as any other profession including Congressperson; political campaign staff are much more racially representative than are consultants as a group, but most people of color working within campaigns are concentrated in a few departments, largely in positions where their primary responsibilities have to do with mobilizing or analyzing members of their own racial group. In other words, some of the dynamics that affect racial compositions of other elite occupations seem to be at play here, as well.

The disproportionate whiteness of the field leads to a number of possible conclusions as well as a variety of questions. It is possible that people of color simply do not want to enter this kind of work, but as sociologists we think those kinds of explanations are unlikely at best. It is more likely that structural as well as attitudinal factors within the world of campaigns serve to exclude people of color. One probable mechanism is the speed with which those running campaigns need to make hiring decisions: campaigns last at most 2 years, and most key campaign staffers are hired towards the end of any campaign. During the intense latter period of a campaign, the work is high-stakes and people work long hours together; these factors combined would lead those making hiring decisions to rely on quick judgments and to have more than the usual amount of concern that their judgments be accurate. This could lead to a lot of hiring based on social network connections or

connections through previous campaign work (a hypothesis I'll examine more fully later in the dissertation), as well as make it easy for white hirers to bring non-conscious prejudices to bear and choose staff with whom they "feel comfortable" – who will largely also be white and probably from the same or similar class backgrounds. Similar dynamics could be at work in sustaining the pronounced lack of gender parity in campaign work.

And, similarly, educational background, especially attendance at an elite institution, may serve as heuristic for indicating campaign-worker quality to those doing hiring, or it may confer network connections to those already in campaigns, or both.

It is clear that campaign work is the province primarily of white men from elite colleges and universities. Although being a "political operative" is not normally thought of as the domain of the privileged, it appears that it is at least as rarefied a field as the legal profession and much more so than the medical profession. In addition to the mechanisms that may serve to keep people out, another likely barrier is the lack of established path or accrediting agency for this kind of work. It is relatively easy to figure out that in order to become a lawyer one must attend law school; it is much more difficult for those without the requisite cultural or social capital to see a path into political work. Although this analysis has not established the mechanisms that result in such an exclusive field, further work will trace politicos careers up to the point at which they serve on a Presidential or contested Senate campaign and beyond, and will analyze patterns of connections among politicos.

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