Chapter 3

Social Campaign Giving: Could You Please Take Out Your Checkbook?

In 2004 Democratic presidential primary candidate Howard Dean raised an unprecedented amount of money for his campaign via online campaign donations. Since that point, countless campaigns have sent unsolicited emails to potential donors asking for contributions. These campaigns have had little success compared to Dean’s original 2004 primary campaign. That is, until the Obama campaign. Why was the Obama campaign so successful at fundraising? According to Joe Trippi, Dean’s 2004 campaign advisor, “Ever since the TV era began in 1960, every single presidential campaign in America has been top-down. Only two have been bottom-up. One was Dean. The other is Obama” (Berman 2008). The bottom-up Obama campaign relied upon a social network of political donors.

The website set up by the Obama presidential campaign called “My.BarackObama.com” leveraged supporters’ social connections to establish a fundraising base comprised of a network of personal friends. Unlike traditional campaign websites where candidates post information for supporters to read, the “MyBarackObama.com” website allowed individuals to communicate with each other to form an online community of Obama supporters. The Obama page encouraged users to “Find local events and groups, contact undecided voters near you and share your story on your blog.” Members of the website described themselves and their reasons for wanting to support Obama in a “profile” and used the site to connect to other Obama supporters. At the close of the campaign in November
2008, “My.BarackObama.com” had over a million and a half members (Bellini 2008).¹

This site encouraged people to bring their personal relationships online. Within each individual’s pre-existing social network, the website allowed the formation of a political network. The campaign used that network to produce additional campaign fundraising support by encouraging individuals to contact their friends and to ask those friends to donate to the campaign. According to Obama staffer and Facebook cofounder Chris Hughes, “The scale and size of this community and its work is unprecedented. Individuals in all 50 states have created more than 35,000 local organizing groups, hosted over 200,000 events and made millions upon millions of calls to neighbors about this campaign. There can be no question that these local, grassroots organizations played a critical role in Tuesday’s victory” (Havenstein 2008).

The groups formed by these online political networks were designed to move people from online participation to real world participation. For example, one of the website’s tools allowed individuals to download a list of their neighbors whom the Obama campaign had identified as potential supporters. The website encouraged users to go to those individuals and speak for a few moments about Obama and the campaign. It then provided the users with a form to relay the results of those conversations back to the campaign – turning each user into a very small grassroots campaign operation. By confirming each participant’s value to the campaign, the website was able to positively affect the participation of each user. More crucial to the success of the website, however, was that this campaign allowed individuals to establish norms of political participation within their pre-existing social network. The focus of this participation was campaign giving.

The Obama online campaign dramatically highlighted the role of personal networks in political behavior and allowed individuals to participate in politics as part of their regular social interactions. According to the campaign website, ”Two weeks after Election Day, supporters are continuing to use the online tools at “My.BarackObama.com”.” Individuals developed political relationships within their pre-existing social relationships.

¹A snapshot of the “My.BarackObama.com” page is included at the end of this chapter, in Figures 3.8 and 3.9.
These social relationships did not end on election day, resulting in the continued website use despite the fact that the political campaign had ended.

The success of the “My.BarackObama.com” website is attributable to two components. First, the website encouraged social interactions between users who had pre-existing social relationships. Many of these social relationships are the result of non-political interactions and thus the campaign did not have to develop relationships between users. Second, the website made campaign donation a public act. Donating to the campaign was then observed within these social relationships and social group members expected each other to contribute. That is, campaign donations became a social norm within these groups: a rule of behavior that imposed uniformity within the social group, where given the expectation of conformity, most people preferred to conform (Durlauf and Blume 2010). The campaign website neither dictated the social norm of giving nor generated social ties between individuals. It simply provided a forum where pre-existing social relationships could become political relationships and publicized the giving patterns of users. Donations increased as a consequence.

The growth of social networking websites in political campaigns underscores the need to understand the structure of who communicates with whom during the course of a campaign and how individuals are persuaded to donate to campaigns. Do friends notice campaign donations? When are donations explicitly social? Other campaign organizations have also developed to take advantage of social ties, such as the Democratic National Committee’s website “PartyBuilder.com” and the Republican National Committee’s website “GOP.com”, both of which allow users to post a profile, to contribute, and to make online social connections. The social networking website Facebook allowed individuals to post their “status” towards the end of the 2008 presidential campaign to remind people to turn out to vote or to express support for particular candidates, and over 1.7 million users posted a “status” in favor of a particular candidate (Bellini 2008). This arena of political campaigning is rapidly changing because of new technologies available to voters and supporters, but these new technologies take advantage of the social component in political behavior which existed prior to the development of online social networking.
3.1 Peer Effects and Political Contributions

Using a single congressional district as a case study, this chapter illustrates how campaign giving is frequently drive by social influence. The political behavior exhibited by the residents of this particular congressional district suggests that donating, like voting, is sustained by a desire to adhere to the social norms of the social network. Using a plurality of methods, from interviewing residents to investigating patterns in observational data, the evidence in this chapter consistently corresponds to a theory of social giving.

The advantage of focusing on a single case study is that it is possible to investigate an entire social network, across these different methods, to look for consistency in the evidence that social ties motivate donations. The disadvantage is that of generalizability, in the sense that the congressional district chosen as a case for this chapter is not representative of the typical congressional district in the United States. Yet, as the Obama campaign webpage anecdotes illustrates, there are likely fundamental aspects of human sociability that are expressed regardless of the avenue in which donating takes place. While many of the other chapters in this book will look at data drawn from a national probability sample, this chapter focuses narrowly on one set of donors to illustrate the mechanisms which persuade them to donate to political campaigns and organizations.

Little is commonly known about the basic characteristics of individual campaign donations, so some descriptive statistics are provided for the donations made by the residents of the Illinois Tenth Congressional District, the case study for this chapter. All publicly-recorded campaign donations from residents of this district and its environs to federal candidates and political action committees from June 2006 to January 2009 are aggregated into a single data set and census data along with individual-level voting history data merged into this file. A donation network is then observed, where two individuals are linked by their donation to a common campaign or organization. The network of donations across individuals provide evidence of giving patterns which are consistent
with the presence of peer effects in campaign giving. These descriptive statistics generate insights into who contributes, to which organizations and what types of gifts are typical. These summaries are based entirely on a group of individuals who have already made the decision to contribute. The statistical analysis then focuses on whether or not peer networks influence additional giving, not whether peer networks generate any donations whatsoever.

Peer networks are key for a range of political behaviors, and network effects are very likely to stimulate campaign giving. However, existing research is typically unable to distinguish the difference between the specific targeting by campaigns or shared characteristics of the donors from true peer effects. By combining an individual’s political campaign donations with individual-level demographic variables and ZIP code-level socioeconomic and demographic variables, it is possible to understand the ways in which individual-giving patterns correspond to the political network. Additional control variables help to parse out the effects of shared characteristics and allow the chapter to focus on patterns of co-giving across individuals. By incorporating additional public records and personal interviews of donors, the observed giving patterns suggest the presence of peer effects. Two sets of evidence support this claim.

First, interview data conducted with these individual donors suggest that along with information that is transmitted between peers about opportunities to give, social influence elicits donations from peers. Individuals report co-giving maintains social status and reputation and allows for the sustainability of a social, donor network. The presence of peer effects in campaign giving is indicative of the role that social networks play in establishing norms of behavior. Survey data from the donors in this congressional district confirm that there do exist social relationships between co-donors and that many of the donors belong to family and friendship networks where there is a norm of campaign giving. Donors who know each other make donations more closely timed together. These are critical tests for the social influence mechanism.

Second, there is weak evidence of peer effects in political contributions after aggregating all publicly-recorded donations in a single congressional district and focusing on the
rate of co-giving between individuals as a proxy for a social network connection between donors. The advantage of analyzing patterns in donation data as opposed to using geography as a network proxy is that individuals are likely to know co-donors in a way in which they are less likely to know their physical neighbors. Controlling for a range of other factors, the dollar amount of individual contributions to political organizations is directly related to the number of shared organizations to which her peers contribute. By increasing the number of donor organizations that are shared across givers, individuals contribute more total dollars, controlling for the rate of giving. This pattern of behavior is consistent with a pattern of behavior that is attributable to social influence.

The empirical results on donating contribute to the body of evidence that political behavior has a social foundation. The donation patterns suggest that some part of giving is attributable to a shared, social action. That is, the donors appear to know and influence each other, the donors friends and families are also contributors, and as the donation becomes more publicly visible, individuals give more total dollars. Yet, this data can do little to control for the problems of homophily, whereby individuals form social connections to other individuals with whom they share characteristics. Likely many donors have become friends because of their personal wealth, and wealth is also highly associated with campaign donations. As such, while this empirical evidence is consistent with the theory that political behaviors are social, it does not provide causal evidence. That these results are consistent with other types of social donation experiments, however, and that the results of the observational, interview and survey data align illustrates the social influence mechanism. Yet another type of participation – donating – is based on social norms and social networks.

### 3.2 When is Campaign Giving Social Giving?

Why do people donate to political campaigns? Are campaign donations rational investments in political outcomes? Some scholars suggest that campaign gifts affect do policy outcomes: if donors choose to invest in a candidate, then the candidate may shift pol-
icy consistent with the donation patterns (Snyder 1990) or actually change his or her roll call vote (Silberman and Durden 1976; Kau, Keenan and Rubin 1979; Chappell 1982). Donor choices suggest that they believe they affect policy outcomes: donors make out-of-district contributions more frequently where they have an increased possibility of exerting influence over party control of seats, indicating that their donations may be highly strategic (Gimpel, Lee and Pearson-Merkowitz 2008; Bednar and Gerber 2010). Furthermore, in their extensive study of participation, Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) maintain that donors contribute based upon individual motivations (such as the similarity between that individual’s personal ideology and the political candidate) to make strategic, political decisions to contribute. If the donor receives a direct benefit from contributing or has a reasonable belief that the contribution is pivotal than the donor may rationally choose to invest in a campaign.

Yet with so many individuals likely to donate, why would any particular individual feel compelled to do so? If donors are motivated to give based upon the possibility of changing a policy outcome, then campaigns are subject to a classic problem of collective action, where it is not possible to prevent non-donors from also benefitting from the donor’s contribution. However, donors do not appear to believe their gift can be substituted by another individual’s gift nor government contributions (Bergstrom et al. 1986; Andreoni 1988). Furthermore, there is little evidence that a donor could plausibly believe his or her gift was pivotal, as only very large amounts of money could affect election outcomes. For example, it would take an increase of approximately $100,000 to change the victory margin by 1% in a typical House race (Jacobson 1980; Levitt 1994).

Individuals are also unlikely to receive a political benefit from their contribution. There is very little well-identified empirical evidence suggesting that campaign gifts affect policies or votes of candidates (Ansolabehere, de Figueiredo and Snyder 2003). As stated by Ansolabehere, deFigueiredo and Snyder (2003: 12), “It seems highly unlikely that 21 million individual donors giving an average of $115 apiece were calculating the return that they would personally receive on this investment.” Do campaign donations present another paradox of participation, like voting, where neither the probability of
making the pivotal gift nor the explicit political benefit are sufficiently high to explain the preponderance of campaign donations?

There is an additional reason that individuals donate to campaigns that relates to the success of the Obama webpage. Sometimes individuals donate to campaigns because their friends are also donating. Many people have had the experience of donating to an organization not because they were looking for an opportunity to strategically invest in a policy outcome, but simply because a friend asked them to donate. Whether this involves sponsoring a friend in a 10K race or buying cookies from a neighbor’s Girl Scout Troop, some donations are a consequence of personal influence. Campaigns specifically encourage their supporters to leverage their social connections to recruit additional donors, and personal requests appear to be particularly effective at generating donations (Brady, Schlozman and Verba 1999; Grant and Rudolph 2002). This is the social component to campaign giving.

Beyond internal motivations, there are two key theories regarding socially motivated gifts. The first is that individuals donate to adhere to social norms, whether descriptive (what most people do) or injunctive (what people ought to do). Individuals typically want to conform to social norms. Experimentally, providing individuals with information about the donation behavior of their peers does generate conformity, suggesting that social comparisons with respect to donation choices motivate giving (Shang and Croson 2006; Karlan and McConnell 2009). Frey and Meier (2004) conduct a randomized field experiment surrounding a mail fundraising campaign run by a university, where some students receive a letter telling them that 64% of other students had previously contributed (this represents the number who actually contributed in the last year) while other students receive a letter telling them that 46% of other students had previously contributed (this represents the number who actually contributed over the last 10 years). Seventy-seven percent of students in the 64% treatment contribute to the fund, while 74.7% of students in the 46% treatment contribute. Similar results are generated with experiments surrounding donation patterns to national public radio (Shang and Croson 2010; Shang, Croson and Reed 2010). Additionally, as the gift becomes more publicly visible, individu-
als are motivated to donate more (Andreoni and Bernheim 2007; Benabou and Tirole 2006; Andreoni 1989; Linardi and McDonnell 2009). This pattern is similar to decisions that individuals make in terms of voting and recycling when given additional social information (Feddersen and Sandroni 2009; Fedderson, Gailmard and Sandroni 2010).

The second theory is that individuals donate due to the explicit effects of social interaction with individuals within their social network. Fundraising professionals, in fact, claim that people do not give to causes, but rather people give to other people (Tempel 2003). Individuals sustain their network relationships by maintaining the same participatory behaviors as those within their social network; in the particular case of campaign giving, this implies donating to the same types of organizations, both in frequency and magnitude, as their network alters (Croson and Shang 2011). These donations are key signals to the network that the individual subscribes to the types of social norms valued by the network. Social networks play a key role in a variety of political participation behaviors as maintaining network social norms, including those which involve a citizen’s political obligations, are a key component of social network membership.

Social networks characterize a range of different political behaviors from candidate choice to the decision to turn out to vote. The primary mechanism which drives these effects is social influence, as behaviors which are stimulated by more personal contact, directly link individual behavior with that of a group, or originate from closer social ties are more likely to occur (Gerber and Green 2000; Gerber, Green and Larimer 2008). Social influence specifically appears to be able to encourage behaviors which are consistent with social norms (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004; Cialdini and Trost 1998; Scheff 2000). Based upon this theory, then, it is the case that campaign giving should be contagious across social relationships.

There are other theories regarding socially motivated gifts. Donations that are publicly visible, for example, may be an attempt by the donor to signal to peers the wealth and status of the donor (Harbaugh 1998; Glazer and Konrad 1996; Veblen 1989). When individual gifts are observed by their peers, individuals may also donate as a way to strategically signal to peers the importance of the particular cause (Vesterlund 2003). Yet
these explanations for socially motivated giving are difficult to reconcile with the empirical support for social norms and social networks. Individuals likely make donations for many reasons, and in this chapter the focus of the investigation is the extent to which their innate sociability stimulates campaign donations.

### 3.3 Political Networks and Contribution Data

Beginning with some of the earliest literature in political science, individual political behavior has been influenced by social context (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Putnam 1966; Putnam 2000). In order to measure the impact of donors’ social context on their political behavior, it is necessary to identify the donors’ political networks.

Political networks are sometimes measured directly via surveys and elsewhere more indirectly via geographic proximity or shared neighborhood, as was the case in the previous chapter. Both types of measurements appear to yield substantively significant results. Consistent across network surveys is correlation between an individual’s peers and her political discussants’ behavior and choices (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992; Huckfeldt, Plutzer and Sprague 1993). Furthermore, spatial correlation in campaign giving has been documented at both a neighborhood and regional level (Cho 2003; Baybeck 2006; Baybeck and Huckfeldt 2002a; Baybeck and Huckfeldt 2002b; Cho and Gimpel 2010).

Yet, there are possible explanations for geographic correlation in donation patterns that have little to do with social ties. Campaigns target specific groups with shared characteristics. For example, individuals with shared party identification or income may receive similar campaign mailers or those with shared geographies may receive the same campaign contact from a door-to-door canvassing effort. Particular candidates or organizations may also be appealing to individuals with certain attributes. Additionally, some individuals may simply be more able to contribute to campaigns due to their age, education, or income (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Gierzynski 2000; Brown 1995; Rosenstone 1993). Even after accounting for shared characteristics, there are likely economies of
scale that exist for campaigns which encourage fundraising efforts to be geographically concentrated and campaigns will clearly target particular geographies which have developed political traditions, this should also include the targeting of geographies which have developed traditions of campaign contributing (Gerber, Green and Shachar 2003; Green and Shachar 2000).

Contribution data allows an additional strategy to assess the presence of a political network. Within a fixed geography – in this case, a single congressional district – it is possible to establish a network variable which weakly parallels the social ties that donors have within that district. By aggregating all publicly-recorded donations for a single congressional district, two individuals are defined to be connected in a political network if they have both made a donation to the same organization. This extends the definition of a network tie from the previous chapter. Instead of using only geography, individuals are now linked both by geography and by similar behavioral patterns. By co-donating, individuals reveal a high probability of a social tie.

Clearly not everyone who has made a donation to the same organization will know each other socially. Yet the majority of campaign funds are raised at fundraisers where the donations occur via face-to-face contact (Ansolabehere, deFigueiredo and Snyder 2003; Jones and Hopkins 1985). By focusing the network analysis in both a particular geography as well as within a group of individuals with a shared behavior, it is possible to both leverage the importance of the geography itself as well as the social connections of supporters, many of whom are likely to be located within the immediate neighborhood of the donor (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992; Cho 2003; Gimpel, Lee and Kaminski 2006; Cho and Gimpel 2007). Additionally, campaigns allocate specific resources to identifying peer networks in order to leverage these networks to increase donations (Brown, Powell and Wilcox 1995; Francia et al. 2003). It is likely that there is a social component to this giving and the most probable mechanism is that of social influence (Freeman 1997). A necessary component for this mechanism to be effective is that the donors know each other. A weak measurement of the presence of those social relationships is co-giving.
3.4 The Tenth Congressional District of Illinois

The Tenth Congressional District of Illinois was chosen for this analysis not because it is a representative congressional district, but specifically because it is unusual. The Tenth Congressional district is unusual in its affluence, strong support for both major political parties, and total number of campaign donations. In the typical congressional district, more than two-thirds of the individual donations will come from outside the district boundaries (Gimpel, Lee and Pearson-Merkowitz 2008). Yet the residents of the Tenth Congressional District are active donors, a fact likely associated with their personal wealth and their exposure to close elections between the Democratic and Republican parties. Gimpel, Lee and Pearson-Merkowitz (2008) refer to these frequent, wealthy donors as members of the “donor class”. This study will focus on the social interactions between this type of donor. The additional fundraising activity in this district facilitates the study of peer network research as many of the donors will likely have interacted with each other at district-level fundraisers. By focusing on a congressional district where many residents are members of the ”donor class”, it is possible to rely upon the geography of the district to establish network connections – it is not easily possible to imagine that all donors to the Obama campaign across the nation, for example, had personal connections to each other. However, within a single congressional district like the IL 10th, it is more likely that these donors have regular social interactions. These are the kind of relationships which are observed on social networking websites and which consist of friends, peers, family and colleagues. Without explicit data on individual’s social ties, it is necessary to rely upon proxies such as geography to assess social influence. This unusual district permits geography to serve as an appropriate proxy. If there is no evidence of social giving in such a wealthy, politically competitive district, then there is likely to be little support for social giving in other districts where individuals have less frequent interactions based upon political contributions. Thus in many ways this district provides a critical test of the social campaign giving theory where geography is serving as one of the characteristics which describe the residents’ social network.
Located due north of Chicago and bordering Lake Michigan, Illinois’ Tenth Congressional District generates high levels of campaign donations. In 2008, Cook and Lake Counties, the two counties included in the Tenth District, collected the most donations in the state with $97 million and $17 million in gifts respectively. High levels of donations are typically associated with competitive elections, voters who support both parties, and affluence. According to the American Community Survey of 2009, the median family income in the Tenth Congressional District was $92,083 with 27% of families earning above $150,000 and only .6% of families in poverty. The area overall has moderate political beliefs and supports organizations, local candidates and national candidates for both major parties. Mark Kirk, a Republican with fiscally conservative and socially liberal views, won this congressional seat five times. Yet the district has voted for Democratic presidential candidates by a significant margin in the last three general elections. On the Cook Political Report’s Partisan Voter Index (PVI), the Illinois Tenth Congressional District is D+6, which means that the area cast 6% more ballots for the Democratic presidential candidates in 2004 and 2008 than the entire United States on average.

The Tenth Congressional District of Illinois meets a set of empirical criteria including geographic concentration of gifts, wealth, and high rates of contribution participation so

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2 This is according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Website is http://www.opensecrets.org/bigpicture/instvsout.php?cycle=2008. Additionally, this district includes four of the top ten donations-by-ZIP code in the state, which correspond to the towns of Winnetka, Lake Forest, Highland Park, and Glencoe. Winnetka itself is the ZIP code with the 18th highest amount of political contributions in the United States.

3 The median housing unit value is $370,080. There are approximately 700,000 residents in this congressional district, of which a strong majority are white (83%) and highly educated (92% have at least a high school degree and 50% have at least a bachelors degree).


5 By far, a majority of the Tenth congressional representatives have been Republican. Rep. Mark Kirk’s predecessor was another moderate Republican, John Porter, who served for over 20 years. Typically, John Porter won over 65% of the vote in his congressional elections. In his final election, he ran unopposed. The Illinois Tenth Congressional District’s last Democratic representative was Abner Mikva, who went on to serve on the US Court of Appeals, in 1975 to 1979. The Republican legacy begins with Elihu Washburne, who was an early Republican congressional representative for the area along with a founder of the Republican Party, a close advisor to President Abraham Lincoln, and a Secretary of State for President Ulysses Grant.
that it is a likely case for the presence of peer effects in campaign giving. At first glance, the geographic pattern of the gifts suggests the presence of peer effects. For example, by looking at contributors’ street addresses, one geographic area, Sheridan Road, produces a large number of donors and donations. In the Tenth Congressional District, Sheridan Road runs north to south along the shore of Lake Michigan with large, gracious and expensive mansions on each side. 279 contributors (or 3% of all contributors) in the Tenth Congressional District live on Sheridan Road. Yet these type of patterns are not sufficient to demonstrate the presence of peer effects; it is both necessary to know if individuals have shared characteristics and to what degree they are likely socially connected. These types of variables are incorporated into the contribution data in the next section.

3.5 Describing Campaign Contribution Data

The campaign contribution information comes from Melissa Data, which provided the Federal Election Commission (FEC) individual-level data on campaign contributions to both local and national political organizations for individuals whose ZIP code corresponds to a residence in the Tenth Congressional District and who made a minimum contribution to a federal campaign or organization of $250.00. The final database included 33,344 donations, which total $35,650,388 in gifts, 12,383 unique donors, and 947 recipients. These campaign contributions were made between June 30, 2006 and January 1, 2009.

The campaign contribution information was merged with information from the Illi-

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6From these contributors, 1091 contributions (4% of all contributions) were made, which results in an average of 3.9 contributions per contributor. The mean amount of a contribution from Sheridan road was $1349.15 and the median amount was $500.

7ZIP codes were used that corresponded with the towns listed on Illinois Tenth District Representative Mark Kirk’s website to determine which ZIP codes are eligible. Given campaign contribution limits and administrative blunders, negative gifts were included in the database. These negative amounts were subtracted against an individuals positive donations to the same organization. Additionally, data from the Federal Election Commission is registered by individuals, and there are frequently inconsistencies in the first name or profession for the same individual as some use a nickname or different job titles for the same position. Individuals were identified as a the same donor if there was a match in their last name and if there first name, middle name or employer were the same.
inois voter file, which records name, gender, birth date, and address for each registered voter. First and last name along with ZIP code were used to match individuals in the campaign contribution database with individuals in the voter file. Approximately 68% of the contributors were identified and 75% of the contributions to individuals were successfully attributed to particular individuals, as unidentified contributors gave fewer gifts. Individuals who were not in the voter file, not matched, or who were matched but missing variables in the voter file had the appropriate variables coded as missing. Aggregate level income data from the 2000 Census based on ZIP code was merged into the donor file, specifically, the percentage of families earning over $200,000 in each ZIP code.

The information obtained from Melissa Data, the Illinois voter file and the U.S Census provide rich data on campaign contributions. This data-set includes all federal contributions, both donations made locally and to other districts. The frequency of gifts ranges substantially. Of the 12,383 unique donors, slightly more than half gave only one gift (6,641 donors). Most donors gave only a few gifts: 2,432 donors made 2 contributions, 1,054 donors made 3 contributions, and 625 donors made 4 contributions. The highest number of gifts per individual was 216 by Kirk Morris to his own campaign for Congress in Illinois’ 8th Congressional District. Also, Robert Abboud, the donor with the second highest number of gifts, made 135 contribution to his own campaign for Congress in Illinois’ 16th Congressional District. The other top donors in terms of number of gifts to political organizations are Jerry Hayden, with 64 contributions, and Richard Holson, with 62 contributions. Both gave to numerous Republican local and national candidates and Republican-leaning Political Action Committees. Overall, the mean number of gifts by an individual in Illinois’ Tenth Congressional District was 2.7 with a median of 1 and a

\[ \text{It is worthwhile to consider why it was not possible to identify 100\% of contributors. Contributors may not be registered voters. Also, these contributors may have registered with their formal or legal name and filled out the forms when making their contribution with a nickname or other variation of their name. Contributors could have recently had a change of address so the ZIP code they used in registering their contribution did not match the updated address in the voter file. Finally, with such large data sets, there are bound to be errors, which means that individuals are not matched due to incorrect information.} \]

\[ \text{For several ZIP codes 60065, 60070, and 60094, this variable was not available. This may be the result of donors’ error when reporting their ZIP code to the Federal Election Commission or areas that are too small or otherwise not analyzed specifically by the US Census Bureau. Nine individuals from these ZIP codes were coded as having missing information for all of the statistics from the 2000 Census.} \]
standard deviation of 4.5.

The median gift was $500. There is a large right tail to the distribution of gift amounts: the mean donation was $1,069 with a standard deviation of $2,356.63, although there are fewer and fewer gifts at higher amounts. Interestingly, this trend is clearly broken at the points where donors can “max out”: both the $2,300 and $4,600 donations amounts. As $2,300 is the campaign contribution limit to a specific candidate for the primary or general election and $4,600 is the limit for the entire election cycle, 4,321 donations are made for $2,300 and 122 donations for $4,600. When also taking into consideration those who reach these campaign contribution levels through several smaller donations, many donations in the Tenth Congressional District are made based upon the legal maximum amount a candidate can receive. When considering the total donation amounts from a contributor, the third quartile and mean amount were near the $2,300 donation limit at $2,300 and $2,879, respectively.

The data shows a slight division between the political organizations that received campaign contributions from the Tenth Congressional District. 709 of the 1066 political organizations received 5 or less donations and 844 political organizations received 10 or less donations. Although there is no easy way to describe the group of political organizations that had 10 or less donations, typically they are organizations for lesser-known out-of-district politicians (i.e. David Woods for Congress), committees to elect other state’s politicians (i.e. Indiana Republican State Committee Inc.), PACs focused on obscure political issues (i.e. Fraternity and Sorority Political Action Committee), and PACs focused on specific industries or companies (i.e. Tile Industry Political Action Committee or TTX Company Employees PACs). The remaining political organization have higher profile PACs or candidate campaigns and receive many more donations. The organizations that received the most donations (and are subsequently quite representative of all the organizations in the second group) are Obama for America with 6,402 gifts, Kirk for Congress with 2,456 gifts, Dan Seals for Congress with 1,976 gifts, and John McCain 2008 Inc. with 1,773 gifts. Although there are only 222 political organizations with 11 or more donations, these groups received 30,883 gifts or approximately 93% of all the gifts in the district.
Including only the 43 political organizations with 100 or more donations, these groups received 25,759 gifts or approximately 73% of all the gifts.

Donors political party affiliations could be inferred in two ways: the party with which they registered when casting a ballot in the 2008 primary election or the affiliation of the group to which they gave the highest number of donations. Only 68% of the matched donors participated in the 2008 general primary election. Out of these donors, 68% (3896) were Democrats and 32% (1862) were Republicans. Using the affiliation of the group that the donor gave the highest number of gifts to was a much more inclusive measure as 98% of the donors were categorized by party affiliation.10 Again in this case, more than half were Democrats (54%).

For the remaining variables, mean voter history is 75%, the median is 80%, and over 38% of matched donors had perfect voter histories of 100%. Of the 8,459 contributors that were identified in the voter file, 5236 or 62% were male and 3223 or 38% were female. Because on average males gave 3.1 gifts and females gave 2.8 gifts, males have a slightly larger role in campaign contributions.11 Between 18 and 100 years-old, campaign donors

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10Political organizations were either classified as Democratic, Republican, Bipartisan, Libertarian, Green, Independent, and Constitution based on one of the following four sets of criteria. First, if the group supported a specific politician or was a leadership PAC, the politician’s political affiliation was used to classify the entire group. Second, based upon the amount of money given by the political organization to federal candidates, the donor was assigned the same party as the candidate if that candidate received over 75% of the PAC’s money. If less than 75% of the money went to one party’s candidates, the organization was classified as bipartisan. The last two rules for classifying organizations were based on the affiliation of the other PACs the organization donated to and how they describe their organization on their website as well as other publicly available materials. Four of the organizations (Americans Against Illegal Immigration, Committee to Elect Delegates, Friends of Sara, and Stericycle, Inc.) that received the most gifts were not classifiable under these standards. Individuals that had unidentified political beliefs due to giving the highest number of donations to these groups were coded separately. The donors are then divided such that 54% (6,695) were Democrats, 37% (4,535) were Republicans, and 9% (1,098) were Bipartisan. Democrats and Republicans were equally politically active as a Welch’s t-test score of 1.53 shows that the difference between Democrat’s mean total number of gifts of 2.8 and Republican’s 2.66 is not significant. But, there is a divergence between Democrats and Republicans when it comes to the total amount contributed and their connectivity to other donors. Republicans’ mean total donation amount of $3,192 was statistically significant when compared to Democrats’ total donation amount of $2,821. On the other hand, Democrats had higher mean degree, a measure of connectivity to other donors, of 2526 compared to Republican’s degree of 1180. Descriptively Democratic and Republican donors do appear different. Democrats gave less money, but have more connections to other donors whereas Republicans were more generous donors, but have fewer connections.

11Additionally, 64% of the donations are given by men and 36% are by women. Beyond making more contributions, male donors give larger dollar amounts each time they give. A slightly higher mean donation
are clustered around a median age of 55 and mean age of 58.4\textsuperscript{12}.

As employer and job title are required by the Federal Election Committee when an individual makes a campaign contribution, it is possible to offer a detailed description of contributors’ work life. The most donors (1,527 donors or 12% of all donors) replied not employed while the most donations came from contributors who were retired (3,871 donations or 11% of all donations) or self-employed (3,680 donations or 11% of all donations). The top five job titles for donors were attorney (1053 donors and 9% of all donations), president (298 donors and 2% of all donors), executive (288 donors and 2% of all donors), physician (239 donors and 2% of all donors), and consultant (218 donors and 1% of all donors). Overall, the 25 companies with the most donors are law firms, insurance companies, financial services companies, and organizations in the health industry. Only six of these companies are in the top 25 employers in the Chicago metropolitan area, which supports a selection mechanism, like peer effects, for causing campaign contribution niches to develop. Not every employer encouraged political contributions. The top five employers for donors were Trustmark Company (85 donors), Abbott Laboratories (70 donors), Sidley, Austin, Brown and Woods (65 donors), Northwestern University (59 donors), and Kirkland & Ellis (59 donors).

The available data allows explicit statistical tests of residents’ donation habits. Yet there are other strategies to establishing evidence of social interaction. Below, interviews and observations of a small number of elite donors are compiled from the district. The interactions of this small group of donors are described to highlight the types of social processes which motivate donations.

amount for men of $1,090.87 than women who had a mean donation amount of $1,003.16 is statistically significant with a Welch’s T-test t-score of 2.92, which means there is a less 5% chance the distributions are the same. The difference between these distributions is heightened when considering male versus female total donation amounts. The mean, median, and standard deviation for male’s total contributions were $3,329, $1,100, and $9,375 whereas as $2,777, $1,000, $7,468 for female’s total contributions. From a Welch’s T-test score of 2.99, there is less than a .5% that the two distributions are the same.

\textsuperscript{12}The ages used here reflect the donor age in 2008. In other words, a donor’s age was calculated by subtracting the donors’ birth year from 2008.
3.6 Wednesday Morning Coffee

One Wednesday morning each month in the Tenth Congressional District, a group of women gather for coffee. They are old friends. They have lived in the district for many years. They talk to each other about the local schools, about the weather, and about their neighborhood. They came to have coffee, however, to talk about politics. These women are all influential Democratic political donors in their district. Early in the primary election season, they invite Democratic candidates to these Wednesday morning coffees to speak about both their ideological platforms as well as their personal autobiographies. These women debate with each other about which candidate they want to support. They decide. Together, they then go out and campaign, convincing other friends and family to contribute to these candidates and causes. They host open houses for the candidates and leave personal notes of invitation for their neighbors to attend and make a small campaign contribution. They recruit personal friends to attend campaign events and fundraisers, sometimes even covering the cost of admission in order to persuade another supporter. These women are the political leaders of the district, and their relationship with each other is both political and personal. This is a prime example of a political network.

In the Democratic congressional primary in the Tenth Congressional District, Dan Seals was running for Congress for the third time. In his two previous campaigns (2006, 2008) he had been the Democratic nominee for the district but had been unable to beat Mark Kirk. The women of the Tenth Congressional District had been strong supporters for Seals. Several of them had hosted events in their homes during his previous campaigns. They had introduced Seals to their friends. They felt personally invested in his campaign.

Yet, in the primary campaign in 2010, not all of the group members were necessarily confident that Seals was the right candidate for the district. He had failed to win in two previous attempts. Should these women support his third try? Some suggested that perhaps it was time for a new Democratic challenger. Others disagreed. Finally, one Wednesday, the other tenable Democratic primary candidate, Julie Hamos, was invited
to the Wednesday coffee. Hamos was currently serving as a member of the Illinois House of Representatives and her district – the 18th District – overlapped with much of the Tenth Congressional District. She had been in public office since 1999 and appeared to be a viable candidate.

After Hamos spoke about her congressional candidacy, the hostess of the Wednesday coffee thanked Hamos for her time. The hostess then turned to the coffee group and asked, “Will you please take out your checkbooks?” With the split opinion in the group about support for Seals and Hamos, many of the women at the coffee were conflicted. Should they write a check for a candidate whom they liked less than Seals? But on the other hand, shouldn’t they support the same candidate as their friend, the coffee hostess?

Many women at the coffee that day wrote checks, and several of them also indicated a level of discomfort with doing so. Campaign giving patterns are significantly based upon the influence of friends, as this story illustrates. This anecdote is supported by other interview data from the district which demonstrates a social basis of campaign giving. Noted social psychologist Robert Cialdini describes “weapons of influence” used by the Tupperware company to increase home sales of their product. These are events held by a hostess, in which she invites a salesman from the Tupperware company to her house, along with a number of her friends. The Tupperware salesman and the hostess split the proceeds of the party. At each Tupperware party there is reciprocity (each person receives a gift), public commitment (each participant describes the benefits and uses of the Tupperware she already owns), and social proof (the sheet to order the new Tupperware is passed around the room). Cialdini notes that this is a ferociously successful business strategy – Tupperware sales exceed $2.5 million per day (Cialdini 2007). These Wednesday morning coffees – and the donations made to Hamos by previous Seals’ supporters – are consistent with the same kind of psychological mechanisms that have made Tupperware parties successful. Individuals have a difficult time resisting appeals by their friends. The coffee hostess produced reciprocity (she served coffee), public commitment (participants talked about their support of Hamos), and social proof (she asked them to each take out their checkbooks). It is difficult to refuse a friend with whom there is a per-
sonal connection, someone known and liked. It is not surprising that many women who attended the Wednesday morning coffee wrote checks to Hamas.

The empirical results that follow in the subsequent sections correspond with interviews conducted with major donors in this congressional district. Twenty-one individuals who are both donors and residents of the Tenth Congressional District were independently interviewed in an effort to ascertain their actual motivations in contributing. The respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions about their motivations for contributing to campaigns. Interview data are complicated to interpret. On one hand, asking people questions about who they know or their giving patterns is likely to elicit sincere, detailed answers. On the other hand, asking people questions about why they contributed to a particular campaign requires the respondents to report on the existence of particular stimuli or an inferential process, features which are known to be problematic with interview data (Nisbett and Wilson 1977). With that caveat in mind, it is useful to at least compare the interview narratives with the empirical results as a potential way to illustrate the mechanism driving the empirical patterns.

Three central themes emerge from these interviews. First, individuals report being influenced by their social network members to contribute. Of the 21 interviews, 9 individuals reported being influenced by their friends and family in a variety of ways. Said one respondent, “Lately, I have only given out of obligation – or my sense thereof – to a friend or associate from whom I solicited funds for Obama.” Another reported that, “my last contribution was influenced by the emails from my political friends who were all grappling with the same decision.”

Second, the respondents reported leveraging their social ties to get additional donations for the organizations they support. Twelve of the twenty-one respondents reported influencing individuals around them to contribute. Said one respondent, “I had significant influence on my immediate friends. Anyone who wanted to talk politics, I would ask if they had contributed, and I would say, ‘You can’t complain to me until you’ve written a check’.” In particular, individuals reported leveraging their family connections. Husbands, wives, and children were most frequently identified as individuals whom the
respondent had strongly encouraged to donate money. Parents particularly described their pride when their children had begun to contribute, as a sign that they had finally matured and realized the need for them to participate in politics in this particular way. Said one donor, “I go door-to-door and leave personal notes for the neighbors. I ask people to participate for free. It’s why I invite people as my guest. My original invitation to participate was from a friend – she realized that she wasn’t just one person but that she could do something.” These individual descriptions of how donors have influenced their families, neighbors and friends to participate correspond with the hypothesis that strong social ties are key to maintaining social norms of political behavior.

Third, individuals identified campaign giving with social relationships. Sixteen out of twenty-one donors indicated that their families donate to campaigns. Nineteen out of twenty-one donors indicated that their friends contributed. Thirteen of the twenty-one donors indicated that their neighbors donated and nine of the twenty-one donors indicated that their extended family donated. Close social ties are associated with similar giving patterns. Anecdotally, these donors report being more likely to attend fundraisers if there are names they recognize in the ‘invite heading’. They also report inviting their own friends to attend these events with them and that fundraising events are places to socialize but also to demonstrate social status. Said one donor, “There’s a social benefit to go to fundraisers – a lot of good friends go and it is nice to be with people who share my core beliefs.” Said another, “I will also bring someone to the fundraisers as my guest and encourage them to give via an open-ended request, whatever they can and want, as a little gets them committed.” These reports correspond with social giving that happens to maintain a norm of participation but also to clearly maintain group membership.

The next section explores whether the empirical patterns in the observational data and survey data support these anecdotes. Looking only at the publicly-available data on giving patterns, it is possible to observe suggestive evidence that individuals are influenced by their peers in terms of their political giving. This is also true with respect to the survey data. These empirical patterns suggest that individuals are correctly able to assess the role of their social network in motivating their giving behavior.
3.7 Degree Centrality and Dollars Given

Scholars who study social networks have developed a number of tools to describe the social relationships that exist between individuals. There are two key distinctions in the description of networks – some networks are described by explicit and institutional social relationships, such as records of marriages (Padgett 1993). Other networks are described by implicit social ties – records of common or shared behaviors like voting patterns (Fowler 2006). Here, I will use the second method, where individuals are considered to be ‘linked’ to each other in a social network by their common donation decisions. That is, each donor is connected to each other donor if they have donated to the same organization. The total number of organizations to which both donors have contributed represents the strength of their social network tie. Repeating this calculation for all donors establishes an implicit social network.

Scholars are increasingly relying upon objective information to establish social networks. Whether the data consists of cosponsorships (Fowler 2006), committee assignments in Congress (Porter et al. 2005), or scientific collaborations (Newman 2001), there are clear advantages to using an objective data-set to define a social network. There are no problems based upon survey non-response or recall. All potential respondents are already included in the observed data. The data that is observed is based upon actual choices and decisions.

This social network, based upon shared donations, is a proxy for the true underlying social relationships. Individuals may have both donated to the same organization but may never have met; instead, for example, they may simply share the same set of characteristics and thus were targeted by these organizations as likely donors. Interview data conducted on these donors, however, indicates that many of the co-donors are in fact socially connected. That individuals are actually less-connected than this variable would indicate will not necessarily be problematic in the analysis of this data; results based upon this variable would likely be stronger if in fact it was possible to observe true social connections.
Based upon co-donation as a definition of connectedness, it is then possible to establish each individual’s degree centrality in the donor network. Centrality is a measurement of the relative importance of each individual within the network. Recall that each individual is connected to each other individual if they have both donated to the same organization. The more frequently the pair of individuals donate to the same organizations, the stronger their connection. That is, suppose two individuals both donated to eight common organizations. The strength of their network tie would then be eight. A central actor in the donation network will then have made numerous donations to the same organizations as many other individuals. Degree centrality is defined as the sum of these connections across all individuals in the network (Freeman 1977; Freeman 1979). Suppose an individual made many gifts to popular organizations – organizations to which many other people also contributed. Then this individual would have a high degree centrality. In contrast, suppose an individual also made many gifts, but in this case to organizations to which no one else contributed. Then this individual would have a low degree centrality. The intuition behind this measurement is to capture the social aspect of giving. Individuals who are giving to organizations that are shared within the network are more likely to have their gifts observed by others. In Figure 3.1, the two graphs provide examples of individuals with high and low degree centrality. Suppose both gray nodes made four political contributions. In the top left figure, the gray node has four connections with the other individuals in the graph. This would correspond to having made donations to organizations to which the other four nodes had also contributed. In the bottom right figure, the gray node has two connections. This would correspond to having made donations to organizations where the top two nodes had also contributed. No one else made donations to her remaining two organizations. The presence of other links between nodes other than the gray node indicate that the other nodes had contributed, but to different organizations than the organizations to which the gray node had contributed. The top left gray node is more central in her network.

Figure 3.1 Goes Here

80
If there is a social component of giving, then individuals with high degree centrality should donate larger amounts. That is, increasing the social visibility of an individual’s giving patterns should stimulate additional giving. When observing the donation data, it is not possible to separate who is socially connected from who donates the same organizations. As a consequence, the donation data itself is used to generate the degree centrality variable. As in Figure 3.1, suppose that an individual had donated to four organizations to which other individuals in the district had also donated. Probably that individual would not personally know all four of those other individuals – they might have had dinner together at campaign events for years, they might be personal friends, or they might have each made online donations to the campaigns without having ever met. That is, co-donating is a weak proxy for social connectedness. Any empirical support to suggest that this variable generates additional campaign giving is likely an underestimate of the true peer effect.

Such an estimate is observed in Figure 3.2, where the individual donor’s degree centrality is plotted on the x-axis and the total dollar amount of all gifts is plotted on the y-axis. A linear regression line is fit between the two.\textsuperscript{13} There is a slight positive relationship between degree and total dollars contributed. As more congressional district residents give to the same organizations, donors contribute more dollars to those organizations. Assuming that degree centrality is associated with personal connections, then this figure suggests that as the gift becomes more publicly visible – that is, as the degree centrality of the donor increases – that the donor is likely to contribute more total dollars in campaign donations.

Figure 3.2 Goes Here

The hypothesis tested is that the total amount of money donated is a function of degree centrality, while controlling for total number of gifts and a variety of other covariates that are likely to determine the total dollars donated. If degree centrality has the expected

\textsuperscript{13}The two outliers – donors with gifts over $150,000 – are excluded from this analysis as these are gifts from candidates to themselves. However, the results are robust to the inclusion of these datapoints.
effect, then as degree centrality increases an individual should be more likely to donate additional dollars. The total number of gifts is necessary as a control variable to ensure that it isn’t simply the case that individuals with high degree – who have made a sufficiently large number of donations to have high degree – are also donating large dollar amounts. Controlling for the total number of gifts ensures that the effect of the degree centrality variable will reveal the marginal rate of increased dollars donated as a function of the social component of campaign giving. It is also necessary to include those control variables which are typically associated with campaign donations – particularly, income, gender and age.

In a negative binomial regression where the dependent variable is the total dollars donated and the independent variables include degree centrality, total number of gifts, the percentage of households in the ZIP code with incomes over $200,000, gender and age, degree centrality has a positive and statistically significant coefficient.\footnote{Negative binomial regression is appropriate since the dependent variable is a count variable.} In terms of the magnitude of this effect, changing the degree centrality from the smallest value observed in the data to the largest value observed in the data would result in an increased rate of donation of $546.42. Coefficients from this regression and first differences without the covariates are included in Table 3.1. The percentage of families in the ZIP code with incomes over $200,000 is positively associated with increased donations, as expected. Age is associated with fewer donations.

Table 3.1 Goes Here

This is an extremely small, but positive effect, of degree. These results are highly suggestive that there is a social effect of campaign giving. They correspond to the theoretical explanation of social influence: that public visibility of a particular behavior, within a social network where the behavior is a social norm, increases the frequency of the behavior. In this case, everyone in this network contributes to campaigns. It is already established as a social norm. For those whose behavior is the most observed by others in the district,
they are likely to contribute the most total dollars. To further ascertain their motivations for donating, they are surveyed, as described in the next section.

3.8 Donor Relationships

To further support the FEC donation data and subsequent personal interviews, 1000 individual surveys were mailed to randomly selected donors in the Tenth Congressional District, with 220 completed and returned. These surveys contained six total questions. The first question provided 75 names of other residents in the district. Donors were asked to circle the names of individuals whom they had met at least once. One third of these names were based upon the top donors in the district. One third of these names were randomly selected from the possible co-donors; that is, individuals who had given to the same political organizations and campaigns as the respondent. One third of these names were randomly selected from the set of donors who were also residents of the district but had contributed to different organizations than the respondent.

This survey question allows a test of the idea that donations are social. If donors know their co-donors more frequently than they know other donors in the district who have donated to different organizations, then there is support for using co-donation as a proxy variable for social relationships. Additionally, this is evidence that there are social relationships within the donor pool. Of the 159 individuals who respondent to the survey, very few respondents were able to identify many names. Respondents knew an average of .27 different donors (min 0, max 3), 1.05 co-donors (min 0, max 23) and 1.14 top donors (min 0, max 11). The ordering of these averages, though, is consistent with the theory that there are more personal relationships among co-donors. A t-test confirms that the average number of relationships with co-donors is statistically significantly larger than the average number of relationships with other donors (t=3.67).

15The survey question read “Below is a list of other residents in your congressional district. Please circle the names of individuals that you have met at least once. Your answers will be kept confidential and will be used solely for research purposes.”
Respondents also know a large number of the top donors, in fact, the rate with which they know the top donors is not statistically distinct from the rate with which they know their co-donors. That the top donors have obtained such prominence in the district again suggests the mechanism which motivates political contributions – the top donors have strong social relationships with other donors. This is a necessary (albeit not sufficient) step towards demonstrating that a component of campaign giving is attributable to a social norm.

The frequency with which individuals recognize these names provides a key and critical test of the hypothesis that co-donation patterns are social – a necessary condition for social giving is that individuals recognize the names of their co-donors. Furthermore, it is possible to use this survey data as a way to establish a donor social network that is distinct from co-donations. Below, two of these avenues are explored.

First, it is possible to use the total number of individuals whom each survey respondent identified to predict the total amount of donations. If donations are driven by social influence, then individuals with a larger social network should donate more (Shang and Croson 2011). Repeating the earlier negative binomial regression, the total amount of gifts is predicted to be a function of each survey respondent’s network size. Table 3.2 describes these results, where each individual’s network size is a positive but not significant predictor of the total amount given, controlling for income, age, gender and the total number of gifts contributed.16

Table 3.2 Goes Here

Second, it is possible to use the date of the donation to examine if donation patterns are consistent with a social explanation. The FEC indicates the date at which point each individual made the contribution.17 It is then possible to compare the difference in time between the donations made by individuals who are not identified as social network

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16 Similar results are generated using an indicator coded as 1 if the respondent indicated that either their immediate family give or that their friends give and 0 else.

17 According to the FEC website, “A contribution is “made” on the date when you relinquish control over it. If mailed, a contribution is “made” on the date of the postmark.”
members compared to the time between donations made by individuals who are identified as social network members. The hypothesis to test is that if network members influence each other, then they should give gifts more closely timed than the rest of the donors in the congressional district.

In order to compare the time between gifts for donors and networked donors, two gifts are randomly selected, made by two different individuals in the donor dataset. The number of days between their gifts is calculated, and this process is repeated 10000 times. To compare, two gifts are randomly selected, made by two different individuals in the donor dataset whom are identified as social network members from the survey (where one individual identifies the other as someone they have met at least once). Again, the number of days between their gifts is calculated and this process is repeated 10000 times. The histograms which result as a consequence of these processes are described in Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4 Go Here

Those individuals who have been identified as social network members in the survey make donations more closely timed together: the mean number of days between two randomly selected donors is 218.89 whereas the mean number of days between two randomly selected networked donors is 199.86. Individuals who know each other give gifts that are approximately a little more than two weeks closer together. A t-test to compare the means of these distributions yields a t-statistic of 8.36 – these values are statistically distinguishable. One possibility is that this is attributable to the fact that they are also giving to the same organizations, so the analysis is repeated but instead by drawing the comparison for the time between gifts across networked co-donors and non-networked co-donors. This comparison yields similar results. In this comparison, the mean number of days between gifts made by two randomly selected co-donors is 204.38, whereas the mean number of days between gifts made by two randomly selected networked co-donors is 196.87 (t-statistic for difference-in-means test is 8.36).
The remaining survey questions address whether particular groups associated with the respondent also donate: family, friends, neighbors and extended family. In this data, 65.41% of the respondents indicate that their immediate family also contribute to political campaigns, 66.04% of the respondents indicate that their friends also contribute to political campaigns, 27.67% of the respondents indicate that their neighbors also contribute to political campaigns, and 37% of the respondents indicate that their extended family also contribute to political campaigns. High correlation in giving patterns among the closer relationships (friends and family) and weaker correlation in giving patterns among the more distant relationships (neighbors and extended family) also supports a mechanism of social influence, wherein there should be larger effects (and hence larger correlations) in closer relationships.

In summary, these survey data confirm that there do exist social relationships between co-donors and that many of the donors belong to family and friendship networks where there is a norm of campaign giving. In looking at the open-ended survey questions, two themes emerge that are consistent with these results. The first is that individual donors contribute based upon a desire to support particular candidates. When asked to describe why they make campaign contributions, individuals consistently identified the desire to intervene with particular campaigns and candidates. Figure 3.5 describes the most frequent words used in these open-ended responses.18 Recall that every individual in this dataset has made contributions.

Figure 3.5 Goes Here

Yet, there is significance evidence of social influence as well. Donors believe they have successfully influenced other individuals to make contributions. When asked to identify whom they have influenced, individuals most commonly report that they have successfully persuaded their friends and family to contribute. Figure 3.6 describes the most frequent words used in these open-ended responses.19

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18 The survey question is worded, “Please describe why you make campaign contributions.”
19 The survey question is worded, “Do you think you have influenced other people to contribute to campaigns and political organizations? Whom have you influenced and how have you done so?”
That these individuals believe they have been successful at influencing their family and friends is distinctly possible given the other empirical results, which are largely supportive of a narrative that social influence plays a significant role in campaign contribution decisions.

### 3.9 It Matters Whose Name is on the Invitation

The in-person interviews generate consistent reports of donors influencing others to contribute and often identify particular strategies, ranging from sending emails to friends about donating or inviting friends to events. The primary theme in these strategies is that of leveraging a social tie to take political action. Donating to political campaigns is part of the social norm for certain groups of individuals. The types of individuals who are solicited and the reports of participation correspond with the theory that the primary mechanism which allows individuals to influence others to donate is that of maintaining norms held by social network ties. Close family ties stimulate donations. Personal connections matter most – for example, one respondent explained that by door-to-door canvassing and leaving personal notes for her neighbors, she had been able to increase the attendance at fundraisers. Fundraising is a personal act. An example from one of the events in this congressional district is included below in Figure 3.7 – an invitation to attend a coffee for Dan Seals, the Democratic congressional candidate whose repeat candidacy generated tension at the Wednesday morning coffee.

![Figure 3.7 Goes Here](image)

Note that the host committee lists the full names of a number of individuals who have clearly donated at the highest level possible on the invitation. This sets up a social norm of giving for the recipients of this mailer: it is clear both who has given and how much they have given. By listing people whom the recipients are likely to know, the recipients realize...
that their friends also expect them to follow their giving behavior. In the randomized field experiments involving national public radio and the college fund, it was clear that signaling social norm expectations from social network members generates donations. This mailer is doing exactly the same thing, going so far as to indicate the dollar amount that each of the host committee members have contributed on the invitation itself.

The interview findings correspond with the patterns in the aggregate data for this congressional district – the dollar amount donated increased with respect to degree centrality, controlling for total donations and other factors which are likely to affect donation amounts. The coefficient on the degree centrality variable is small but statistically significant and positive, which supports the hypothesis that if individuals are more likely to be observed in their behavior, then they will donate additional dollars. These regressions indicate that in fact degree centrality has the potential to affect donation choices. Survey data supports using degree centrality as a proxy for the visibility of the gift and further indicates that respondents are frequently embedded in family and friend networks that also donate to campaigns.

The decision to participate in politics by donating money to campaigns is one that is very publicly observable – records are publicly available online regarding each individual’s contributions, and friends are likely to notice the presence of other friends at campaign events and fundraisers. As such, this is a political behavior that is likely to be significantly affected by peer networks. Donors to campaigns are not typical citizens. They are “overwhelmingly rich and well-educated” (Francia et al. 2003:27). Yet, donors are also disproportionately likely to participate in other political behaviors as well – voting, attending meetings, writing letters, and talking to others about politics (Rosenstone

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20A quick look at the respondents in the American National Election Survey (ANES) finds that approximately 10% of the respondents typically donate to some kind of political campaign or organization. These results are observable in the Appendix, in Figure 3.10. In 1984, the ANES asked a more specific question regarding what motivated donors to contribute. In 1984, a year in which the general contribution rate was 10.7%, respondents were asked about the way in which they were solicited. Among those asked to contribute in a mailing, 8.9% did contribute and cited the mailing as the cause. Among those asked to contribute with a telephone call, 21% did and cited the telephone call as the cause. Finally, among those asked directly (face-to-face) to contribute, 39% did and cited that personal contact as the cause. This high rate of donation after personal contact recruitment is extremely consistent with the other findings in this chapter.
and Hansen 1992; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Donors contribute based upon their partisanship, interests, ideology, and personal identity (Francia et al. 2003; Mansbridge 2003). These are characteristics which are frequently associated with many types of political participation. Political participation often poses a collective action problem in traditional political science, and the suggestion here is that the collective action problem is resolved via a network effect – whether via reciprocity, reputation, or simply making the behavior publicly visible, these are all then mechanisms which are delivered through social contagion. By illustrating that these political elites are also subject to the same types of social influence in their donation participation that the average citizen experiences in their voting participation in South Los Angeles suggests that our political behaviors are social, and that this phenomena is a common part of the fabric of our human experience.

What do these results indicate about the social citizen? The empirical implication is that as gifts are more public, there is increased pressure to adhere to a social norm of giving. As appears to be generally the case with political participation, most people are inclined to participate in politics because someone asked (Brady, Schlozman and Verba 1999). The social citizen donates money to campaigns – at least, additional campaign dollars – when someone from the social network notices the gift. These are public acts of adherence to a social norm of giving. Casting a ballot was also maintained by a social norm. The following sections explore the extent to which choice, as opposed to only participation, is also affected by social networks and social norms.
3.10 Tables and Figures

Figure 3.1: Example of Degree Centrality

Suppose each gray node made four contributions. The top left gray node donated to four organizations shared by one of each of the white nodes. The bottom right gray node donated to two organizations shared by two white nodes. The gray node in each graph depicts a different level of degree centrality. The top left node has high degree centrality (4), where the bottom right node has low degree centrality (2). Note that the bottom right gray node also does not have the highest degree centrality in her graph, as there is a white node who also donated to two organizations shared by two other white nodes.
Figure 3.2: Total Donation Amount (in dollars) by Degree Centrality
Table 3.1: Negative Binomial Regression Coefficients: Effect of Degree on Dollars Given

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<th>Coefficient</th>
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<td>.00002*</td>
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<td>(.00000)</td>
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<td>.24628*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.00461)</td>
<td>(.00401)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of Families over $200K</td>
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<td>.01751*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.00081)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.02153)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>(.01419)</td>
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<td>$275.65</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(131.21)</td>
<td>(97.38)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The difference in the number of observations reflects the presence of missing data in the covariates in the first column. These results are robust to the exclusion of the two outliers (individuals who made more than 100 gifts), replacement of the census variable for income with data which approximates each individual’s current home value (from the website Zillow), and fixed effects for each campaign or organization.
Table 3.2: Negative Binomial Regression Coefficients: Effect of Network Size on Dollars Given

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Network Size</td>
<td>.036 (.020)</td>
<td>.026 (.020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Gifts</td>
<td>.223* (.019)</td>
<td>.225* (.021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Families over $200K</td>
<td>.011* (.005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.177 (.117)</td>
<td>.187 (.117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.001 (.005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>6.40* (.098)</td>
<td>6.08* (.342)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N First Differences (Min to Max Network Size)</th>
<th>220</th>
<th>211</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\alpha$</td>
<td>$1099.54 (747.54)$</td>
<td>$749.89 (652.29)$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference in the number of observations reflects the presence of missing data in the covariates in the first column. The sample includes all individuals who responded to the mail survey asking them to identify up to 75 individuals from the congressional district whom they had met 'at least once'.
Figure 3.3: Days Between Gifts, All Donors

Mean number of days: 218.89, standard deviation 162.89. The histogram represents the distribution of the total number of days between gifts from randomly drawing gifts made by 10000 pairs of individuals from the pool of donors and comparing the time between those gifts.
Figure 3.4: Days Between Gifts, Networked Donors

Mean number of days: 199.86, standard deviation 155.84. The histogram represents the distribution of the total number of days between gifts from randomly drawing gifts made by 10000 pairs of individuals from the pool of networked donors and comparing the time between those gifts.
Figure 3.5: Frequent Words in the Open-Ended Survey Question: “Please describe why you make campaign contributions”
Figure 3.6: Frequent Words in The Open-Ended Survey Question: "Whom have you influenced and how have you done so?"
Figure 3.7: Example of Dan Seals' Campaign Donation Invitation
## 3.11 Appendix

Table 3.3: Congressional Election Results for the Illinois Tenth Congressional District 1984-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democratic Candidate</th>
<th>Percentage of Vote</th>
<th>Republican Candidate</th>
<th>Percentage of Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Daniel J. Seals</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td>Mark S. Kirk</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Daniel J. Seals</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>Mark S. Kirk</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Lee Goodman</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>Mark S. Kirk</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Henry H. Perritt</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>Mark S. Kirk</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Lauren B. Gash</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>Mark S. Kirk</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>John E. Porter</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Philip R. Torf</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>John E. Porter</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Andrew M. Krupp</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>John E. Porter</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Michael J. Kennedy</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>John E. Porter</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Peg McNamara</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>John E. Porter</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Eugene F. Friedman</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>John E. Porter</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Robert A. Cleland</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>John E. Porter</td>
<td>77.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Ruth C. Braver</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>John E. Porter</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3.8: My.BarackObama.com, Page 1

Betsy Sinclair

MY PROFILE
Share some basic information about yourself and why you support Barack Obama.
Create Your Profile

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR CAMPAIGNS AVAILABLE TO YOU
Get out the vote for Jim Martin for US Senate to help Barack Obama implement his vision in Washington, DC!
Also, to organize a...

MY BLOG
Share your thoughts and experiences with other Obama supporters. Whether it's a photo, personal story, or simply your opinion on the campaign, you can share it through a personal blog.
Manage Your Blog

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
1

What's This?

My Activities

Events Hosted 0
Events Attended 0
Calls made 0
Doors Knocked 0
Number of blog posts 0
Donors to your personal fundraising 0
Amount raised $0.00
Groups Joined 0

MY ACTIVITIES

30 Days

My Activity Index

Details

Facebook
Connect your Facebook account to your MyBO Account

Facebook

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Share your ideas to help shape the future of this movement
Your hard work built this movement. Now it's up to you to decide how we move forward.

THANK YOU
Share your campaign experience and your thoughts on the best way to keep supporting our agenda for change.

This Victory Is Yours
Thank you for everything you have done to help this campaign. Because of the work you did, Barack Obama has been elected
President. And as Barack said on election night, "I will never forget who this victory truly belongs to—it belongs to you."

MY NETWORK
Invite your friends and family to join the network. Or find friends already on My.BarackObama.
Read old message(s)?
Compose a Message
Invite your friends to join

FUNDRAISING
Create a personal fundraising page. Set a fundraising goal, invite your friends, and track your progress.
Signup now →

MY EVENTS
EVENTS I'VE CREATED
Plan an Event
EVENTS I'M ATTENDING
Signup for an Event
EVENTS NEAR ME

Prayer CHANGES America!
Rally in Chicago for the Global Day of Action for Climate Solutions!
Test Change Event

Event: Prayer CHANGES America!
When: Nov 25, 2008
Where: Teleconference
Chicago, IL 60612
Type: Meeting
Map: Google | MapQuest

Details Attend

MY GROUPS
Joining one of the thousands of groups on My.BarackObama is one of the best ways to get more involved. Find a group near you.
Join a Group
This rate reflects whether the survey respondent on the American National Election Survey indicated they had made any political contribution, although it explicitly does not include public financing of political campaigns via federal income tax returns.