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WOMEN, POLITICS, AND GENDER INEQUALITY

JOYA MISRA *

Women's representation in U.S. politics has increased but remains substantially lower than in many other countries. This Article first examines the structural impediments to higher levels of women's representation, including how gender stereotypes may limit women's electoral success. Then, the focus shifts to how women's representation may and may not result in different kinds of policy priorities. Finally, the Article takes a more intersectional approach to consider how variations among women impact political priorities and approaches.

INTRODUCTION

How has women's involvement in U.S. politics changed since the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment? Progress has been slow. Women did not stand for and win elections in large numbers for many decades after attaining suffrage. Fifty years after the Nineteenth Amendment's ratification, women made up only 3% of Congress.¹ Yet in the last fifty years, more progress has occurred. Women now make up almost a quarter of elected officials in U.S. Congress and almost 30% of officials in state legislatures.² By gender and race, women of color now compose about 9% of Congress and about 7% of state legislators.³ While women have

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1. *Women in Elective Office 2019*, CTR. AM. WOMEN & POL., <https://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-elective-office-2019> [<https://perma.cc/6X89-PFVV>].

2. *Id.*

3. *Id.*

not yet reached parity, the first century of women's suffrage in the United States has seen some change.

In the 2018 election, a record number of women in the United States ran for election and were elected. Indeed, non-incumbent women were more likely to be elected than non-incumbent men.⁴ The surge of women politicians was both stronger and more successful in the Democratic party than in the Republican party.⁵ Success for women was also reflected in the increasing number of women of color politicians. Although the number of women of color in the Senate remained steady after the 2018 election, the number of women of color in the House of Representatives increased. In 2019, women of color made up almost 50% of Democratic women in the House, though still less than 10% of Republican House women.⁶ Changes are also apparent in presidential elections. While a number of women have run for the presidency under smaller parties like the Socialist party or the Green party, Hillary Clinton in 2016 is the only woman to date to run for the presidency in the general election under the mantle of a major party.⁷ There were also a number of women candidates who initially ran for the Presidency of the United States in the 2020 election, with substantial variation among these women by race and gender, although none of these candidates was successful in winning the party's nomination.

This Article aims to place gendered politics into a larger context: exploring women's formal engagement in politics, how women's involvement in politics does or does not translate into different priorities or policies, and variation in women's representation by race and ethnicity. The first Part considers women's involvement in formal politics, comparing the United States to other countries and reflecting upon the factors that might lead to higher levels of women's representation. The second Part examines how gender stereotypes might limit women's success in democratic elections. The third Part explores whether women have different political priorities than men and how this relates to party politics. The final Part focuses on how women of color have engaged in

4. KELLY DITTMAR, AM. WOMEN & POL. CTR, UNFINISHED BUSINESS: WOMEN RUNNING IN 2018 AND BEYOND (2019), <https://womenrun.rutgers.edu> [<https://perma.cc/3J99-7E5V>].

5. *Id.*

6. *Id.*

7. *Women Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates: A Selected List*, CTR. AM. WOMEN & POL., https://cawp.rutgers.edu/levels_of_office/women-presidential-and-vice-presidential-candidates-selected-list [<https://perma.cc/PSM6-UNDJ>].

politics, recognizing that women's interests may vary by race, class background, and other factors.

I. WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN FORMAL POLITICS

Across the world and over the last century, there has been an enormous shift in women's political participation. In 1890, women did not have voting rights in any country; by 2015, women had gained formal political rights in almost every country in the world.⁸ Suffrage was hard won. Progress toward women's voting rights was initially made in the early 1900s, and consistently increased through the 1970s, by which time most countries had adopted women's suffrage, although a few holdouts remained.⁹ For example, women voted for the first time in municipal elections in Saudi Arabia only in 2015.¹⁰

Women's political activity has also changed over time. For over seventy years after receiving the right to vote, men were more likely to vote in elections than women.¹¹ Currently, in the United States, women are more likely to turn out for elections, but women are also generally less politically active than men.¹² Indeed, political action differs for men and women; men are more likely to join parties and other collective types of political action, while women are more likely to engage in private activism, such as boycotts or signing petitions.¹³

Over time, focus has shifted from women's political rights—or voting rights—to women's representation in legislatures.¹⁴ Women tend to remain underrepresented in most political systems. Women's engagement in education and the labor market, the influence of international women's movements, the structural organization of the

8. Pamela Paxton et al., *Gender in Politics*, 33 ANN. REV. SOC. 263, 265 (2007) [hereinafter *Gender in Politics*]; Pamela Paxton et al., *The International Women's Movement and Women's Political Representation, 1893–2003*, 71 AM. SOC. REV. 898, 898 (2006) [hereinafter *International Women's Movement*]. See generally *Saudi Arabia's Women Vote in Election for First Time*, BBC NEWS (Dec. 12, 2015), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35075702> [<https://perma.cc/CW8G-TZWN>] [hereinafter *Saudi Arabia*].

9. See *International Women's Movement*, supra note 8.

10. *Saudi Arabia*, supra note 8.

11. *International Women's Movement*, supra note 8; M. Margaret Conway, *Women and Political Participation*, 34 POL. SCI. & POL. 231, 231–33 (2001).

12. Jennifer Wolak, *Candidate Gender and the Political Engagement of Women and Men*, 43 AM. POL. RES. 872, 874 (2015); *Gender in Politics*, supra note 8; Sidney Verba et al., *Knowing and Caring about Politics: Gender and Political Engagement*, 59 J. POL. 1051, 1051 (1997).

13. Hilde Coffé & Catherine Bolzendahl, *Same Game, Different Rules? Gender Differences in Political Participation*, 62 SEX ROLES 318, 323 (2010).

14. See *International Women's Movement*, supra note 8.

political system, and other cultural factors all may help explain where and when women are more highly represented as legislators.¹⁵

The United States is not a leader in women's political representation. In 2019, the United States ranked around 78th in women's representation in the lower house of the national parliament (e.g., U.S. House of Representatives), with women making up about 23.5% in the lower house.¹⁶ In some countries such as Rwanda, Cuba, and Bolivia, women make up more than 50% of the lower house.¹⁷ Women make up 40–50% of the lower house in countries as diverse as Mexico, Sweden, Costa Rica, South Africa, and Spain.¹⁸ Yet, in the United States, women make up a much smaller percentage of legislators, making the United States more comparable to countries such as China, Lesotho, Chile, and the UAE.¹⁹ Women in the United States are also much less likely to be in ministerial positions—the United States ranks 88th in women's representation in ministries, at about 22%, as compared to countries like Spain at 65%, Nicaragua at 56%, and Sweden at 55%.²⁰ Indeed, women's representation in U.S. ministries is slightly lower than in countries as diverse as Egypt, India, and Jamaica.²¹ The United States is simply not a trailblazer in women's political leadership.²²

Nordic countries tend to have, on average, the highest levels of women's participation in politics, while Middle Eastern countries have, on average, the lowest levels.²³ Throughout the world, there are cultural barriers to women's participation in politics.²⁴ Even in Sweden, with high levels of women's political participation, there is evidence that women are less likely to move into top leadership positions.²⁵ Countries can also move toward having fewer women legislators—former socialist countries have, on average, seen declines in the percentage of women in high office since the end of the Cold War.²⁶

15. *Id.*

16. *Women in Politics: 2019*, UN WOMEN, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/03/women-in-politics-2019-map> [<https://perma.cc/2ZZ8-X4GQ>].

17. *Id.*

18. *Id.*

19. *Id.*

20. *Id.*

21. *Id.*

22. *Id.*

23. *Gender in Politics*, *supra* note 8.

24. *Id.*

25. Olle Folke & Johanna Rickne, *The Glass Ceiling in Politics: Formalization and Empirical Tests*, 49 COMP. POL. STUD. 567, 567–99 (2016).

26. *Gender in Politics*, *supra* note 8, at 275.

Explanations for places where women are less engaged in politics may reflect where women are in terms of inclusion in education and employment. If women are excluded from the public sphere more generally, they often find it more difficult to gain access to political leadership.²⁷ Women's low levels of political leadership in the United States compared to other countries does not appear to be related to women's level of education or labor market experience, both of which are quite high.²⁸

Educated women have played a key role in ensuring political rights through their involvement in women's movements.²⁹ The influence of women's movements also plays a key role in explaining where women have achieved greater political representation. Research shows that the more engaged a country is in international women's movements, the more likely that the country will adopt policies aimed at increasing women's political rights.³⁰ The United States also has seen strong women's movements, as well as strong engagement with international women's movements, despite its lower level of women's political representation.

Religious and other cultural values have also been associated with greater political representation, with women's political leadership somewhat more evident in countries that are primarily Protestant, relative to Catholic, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or other religions.³¹ Yet again, these factors might imply that women's political representation would be higher in the United States, which is heavily Protestant. Thus, the United States appears to be exceptional in its lower levels of women's political representation, despite a number of factors that might suggest more robust levels of women's political engagement.

The structure of the electoral system may be the best explanation for lower levels of women's political representation in the United States. The United States uses a winner-take-all plurality majority system, which

27. PAMELA PAXTON & MELANIE M HUGHES, *WOMEN, POLITICS, AND POWER: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE* (2015).

28. *Gender in Politics*, *supra* note 8; Richard E. Matland, *Women's Representation in National Legislatures: Developed and Developing Countries*, 23 *LEGIS. STUD. Q.* 109, 113 (1998); *International Women's Movement*, *supra* note 8.

29. PAXTON & HUGHES, *supra* note 27, at 53; Matland, *supra* note 28, at 113; *International Women's Movement*, *supra* note 8, at 903.

30. *International Women's Movement*, *supra* note 8, at 912; Melanie M. Hughes, *Intersectionality, Quotas, and Minority Women's Political Representation Worldwide*, 105 *AM. POL. SCI. REV.* 604, 606 (2011) [hereinafter *Intersectionality*]; Melanie M. Hughes et al., *Transnational Women's Activism and the Global Diffusion of Gender Quotas*, 59 *INT'L STUD. Q.* 357, 364 (2015) [hereinafter *Transnational Women's Activism*].

31. *Gender in Politics*, *supra* note 8, at 271.

means that particular candidates stand for election and either win or lose.³² In proportional representation systems, parties win seats in relation to the number of votes cast for the party; those seats are then represented by men and women in that party. Votes tend to be more focused on a specific party's platforms—the issues they support or do not support—rather than a specific candidate's profile. When proportional representation systems have multimember districts, there are usually multiple people on the list; men do not have to lose for women to win, and these lists may be more gender balanced than they would otherwise be.³³ There may also be lower opportunity costs to parties for including women on the ballot in proportional representation systems.³⁴ Since the United States uses a plurality majority system, people vote for specific candidates rather than parties or platforms, which may disadvantage women, who are less likely to be seen as strong candidates due to gender stereotypes.³⁵

Another structural feature of elections is the implementation of policies such as gender quotas; indeed, more than one hundred and thirty countries now have some form of gender quotas in place, even though relatively few had quotas in place as recently as the 1970s.³⁶ Gender quotas take a variety of forms. For example, many countries legislate a certain percentage quota of women candidates in lower-house parliamentary elections,³⁷ though fielding women candidates does not necessarily lead to women being elected.³⁸ In another system, a certain number of lower-house parliamentary seats are directly set aside for women. Set-asides are generally very successful in ensuring women's representation in the legislature, although if the set-asides are for a low

32. *Gender in Politics*, *supra* note 8, at 260; *International Women's Movement*, *supra* note 8, at 903.

33. See *International Women's Movement*, *supra* note 8, at 903; see also Matland, *supra* note 28, at 112.

34. Matland, *supra* note 28; Pamela Paxton et al., *Growth in Women's Political Representation: A Longitudinal Exploration of Democracy, Electoral System and Gender Quotas*, 49 EUR. J. POL. RES. 25, 25–52 (2010) [hereinafter *Growth in Women's Political Representation*].

35. *Gender in Politics*, *supra* note 8; *International Women's Movement*, *supra* note 8, at 903.

36. See generally, *Growth in Women's Political Representation*, *supra* note 34; *Intersectionality*, *supra* note 30; *Transnational Women's Activism*, *supra* note 30.

37. *Gender Quotas Database: Legislated Candidate Quotas*, IDEA, <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/legislative-overview> [https://perma.cc/CXV8-V9EJ].

38. *Intersectionality*, *supra* note 30.

level, such as 10% of legislators, these approaches may operate more as “window dressing” than meaningful change.³⁹

In many countries (which often include countries that have percentage quota for candidates or set-aside parliamentary seats), political parties have voluntarily set quotas for women; these vary a great deal in impact.⁴⁰ In South Africa, out of nineteen parties, only the largest, the African National Congress, has adopted a quota (at a 50% threshold).⁴¹ In Spain, seven parties have set quotas (at a 40% threshold).⁴² Where parties have put quotas in place, we can often see greater representation of women in the legislature, as with Spain and South Africa. However, the United States and its major parties do not currently have quotas in place, which may help explain the relatively low level of women’s political representation in the United States.

II. GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ELECTABILITY

Without quotas—and without proportional representation systems—“electability” plays a key role in whether women make it into political office. In many countries, including the United States, women may be stereotyped as not having the qualities necessary to govern effectively. Expectation states theory argues that cultural stereotypes about the worthiness and competence of particular groups, particularly in certain contexts, help explain how they are evaluated and rewarded.⁴³ For example, women may be viewed as having the right qualities to serve as a preschool teacher and would be more appropriate than men for such a job, while men may be viewed as having better qualities to succeed in politics. In fields like politics, which are stereotyped as men’s domains,

39. *Id.*; *Gender Quotas Database: Reserved Seats*, IDEA, <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/reserved-overview> [<https://perma.cc/X298-TS58>].

40. *Gender Quotas Database: Voluntary Political Party Quotas*, IDEA, <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/voluntary-overview> [<https://perma.cc/CXV8-V9EJ>].

41. *Id.*; see *Political Parties and Organisations*, SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT, <https://www.gov.za/links/political-parties-organisations-0> [<https://perma.cc/C3RC-UFFF>].

42. *Gender Quotas Database: Voluntary Political Party Quotas*, IDEA, <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/voluntary-overview> [<https://perma.cc/CXV8-V9EJ>].

43. See generally, CECILIA L. RIDGEWAY, *FRAMED BY GENDER: HOW GENDER INEQUALITY PERSISTS IN THE MODERN WORLD* (2011) [hereinafter *FRAMED BY GENDER*]; Cecilia L. Ridgeway, *Gender, Status, and Leadership*, 57 *J. SOC. ISSUES* 637, 637–55 (2001) [hereinafter *Gender, Status, & Leadership*]; Cecilia L. Ridgeway, *Why Status Matters for Inequality*, 79 *AM. SOC. REV.* 1, 1–16 (2014) [hereinafter *Why Status Matters*].

women are often at a disadvantage, particularly if they act against status expectations, such as asserting authority.⁴⁴

Gendered stereotypes about the nature of politics may lead to assumptions that men are more likely to have the requisite skills of dominance and competitiveness. The traits that people relate to politicians, in general, are much more like the traits people relate to men politicians than women politicians.⁴⁵ Research suggests that most people think that qualities like being “assertive,” “decisive,” and “ambitious” help men who are seeking high political office more than women. On the other hand, being “approachable,” “compassionate,” and “physically attractive” help women who are seeking high political office more than men.⁴⁶ Even if gender stereotypes suggest that women may be more skilled in the areas of compassion and collaboration, people may further be more likely to view skills like being assertive and decisive as more important for serving in elected office.⁴⁷ Research points out that, for example, women are much less likely to be seen as able to handle a “military crisis” or “combat terrorism,” although they are more likely to be seen as able to handle “children’s welfare.”⁴⁸

Stereotypes about men’s and women’s roles may be activated and impact whether women are seen as electable or even elected. For instance, women are more likely to be stereotyped as warm, including being honest, courteous, and relatable, but are less likely to be stereotyped as competent, including being independent, intelligent, and hard-working.⁴⁹ This can play out in complex ways during political campaigns. Hillary Clinton was typed as competent by some, but not warm. While being competent might have worked in her favor, the fact that she was not seen as warm—which goes against expectations for women in U.S. society—worked against her

44. Monica C. Schneider & Angela L. Bos, *Measuring Stereotypes of Female Politicians*, 35 POL. PSYCHOL. 245, 255 (2014).

45. *Id.*

46. Juliana Menasce Horowitz et al., *Women and Leadership 2018: Wide Gender and Party Gaps in Views About the State of Female Leadership and the Obstacles Women Face*, PEW RES. CTR. (Sept. 30, 2018), <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2018/09/20/women-and-leadership-2018/> [<https://perma.cc/CR6F-XYGV>].

47. Carly Schmitt & Hanna K. Brant, *Gender, Ambition, and Legislative Behavior in the United States House*, 40 J. WOMEN POL. & POL’Y 286, 286–308 (2019).

48. Jennifer L. Lawless, *Women, War, and Winning Elections: Gender Stereotyping in the Post-September 11th Era*, 57 POL. RES. Q. 479, 482, (2004).

49. Elizabeth R. Brown et al., *Ain’t She a Woman? How Warmth and Competence Stereotypes About Women and Female Politicians Contribute to the Warmth and Competence Traits Ascribed to Individual Female Politicians*, 18 ANALYSES SOC. ISSUES & PUB. POL’Y 105, 105–25 (2018).

“electability.”⁵⁰ If people voting in an election view a woman candidate as competent but not warm they may be less likely to vote for her. Women, therefore, tend to have to walk a fine line as political candidates.

In experimental research that explores how people respond to candidates with the same qualities and only differ by gender, people express more ambivalence toward women candidates than their male counterparts, suggesting that stereotyping by gender continues to impact for whom people choose to vote.⁵¹ However, stereotypes may have different effects for candidates at different levels of government. For example, voters may value “male traits” more for the presidency, while these same traits matter less in local elections.⁵² Overall, research suggests that people have less favorable attitudes toward women leaders than men leaders, making it more difficult for women to attain leadership positions and be recognized as effective leaders.⁵³ However, some research suggests that the influence of stereotypes is waning.⁵⁴

Evidence does seem to suggest that women in the United States are increasingly likely to win election. But when women stand for election, they are also more likely to face a more crowded primary field than men do; this is also true when they are an incumbent.⁵⁵ In one study based in the United States in 2018, the authors reported, “About seven-in-ten women say there are too few women in high political offices . . . about half of men say the same.”⁵⁶ Approximately half of respondents blame gender discrimination for the paucity of women in higher office.⁵⁷ However, there is a fairly large gender gap by party in these beliefs. For example, only 33% of Republicans or those who lean Republican think there are too few women in high political office, relative to 79% of Democrats or those who lean Democratic.⁵⁸

50. *Id.*; Kathleen Dolan, *Gender Stereotypes, Candidate Evaluations, and Voting for Women Candidates*, 67 *POL. RES. Q.* 96, 96–107 (2014); Alice H. Eagly & Steven J. Karau, *Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders*, 109 *PSYCHOL. REV.* 573, 573–98 (2002).

51. See Sun Young Park & Young Min Baek, *Citizens’ Ambivalence toward Female Politicians: Why Ambivalence Matters for Gender Equality in a Democracy*, 40 *J. WOMEN POL. & POL’Y* 309, 309–29 (2019).

52. Kathleen Dolan & Timothy Lynch, *The Impact of Gender Stereotypes on Voting for Women Candidates by Level and Type of Office*, 12 *POL. & GENDER* 573, 573–95 (2016).

53. See generally Eagly & Karau, *supra* note 50.

54. Dolan, *supra* note 50; Dolan & Lynch, *supra* note 52.

55. Jennifer L. Lawless & Kathryn Pearson, *The Primary Reason for Women’s Underrepresentation? Reevaluating the Conventional Wisdom*, 70 *J. POL.* 67, 67–82 (2008).

56. Horowitz et al., *supra* note 46.

57. *Id.*

58. *Id.*

It appears that there has been an increase in support for women running for election in the United States, also correlated with party identification. For example, both Democratic women (83%) and men (75%) express that the surge in women as candidates in 2018 was “a good thing,” as compared to 45% of Republican women and 34% of Republican men.⁵⁹ Asked whether it would be a good thing for the country if a woman from their *own* party was elected as President, 69% of Democrats viewed a Democratic woman being elected president as good, while only 47% of Republicans viewed a Republican woman president as good.⁶⁰ Thus, there may be ideological differences about women’s role in politics that differ by party.

Do women candidates or visible women leaders activate women as voters? Women may see women candidates as representing their issues more effectively than men candidates do. Yet experimental research suggests that women do not report being more likely to vote whether the candidates in a race are men or women, finding that “women are no more engaged, no more efficacious, and no more interested in campaigns when female candidates are present than when the candidates are male.”⁶¹ On the other hand, men report that they are less likely to vote when both candidates in a race are women.⁶² These effects on both men and women voters are true whether the woman candidate is a member of the same party as the voter or not.⁶³ While some research suggests that women’s political engagement does increase in settings with visible women leaders,⁶⁴ other research shows that the presence of women politicians has only a small impact on women’s voting or decisions to run for office.⁶⁵ At this stage, it is unclear whether the visibility of women leaders may be inspiring more political engagement among women.

59. Ruth Igielnik & Juliana Menasce Horowitz, *Most Americans Say More Women Running for Congress is a Good Thing, as Hope for a Female President Grows*, PEW RES. CTR. (Aug. 22, 2018), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/08/22/most-americans-say-more-women-running-for-congress-is-a-good-thing/> [https://perma.cc/LC29-VQTW].

60. *Id.*

61. Wolak, *supra* note 12, at 883.

62. *Id.*

63. *Id.*

64. Lonna Rae Atkeson, *Not All Cues Are Created Equal: The Conditional Impact of Female Candidates on Political Engagement*, 65 J. POL. 1040, 1051 (2003); Christina Ladam et al., *Prominent Role Models: High-Profile Female Politicians and the Emergence of Women as Candidates for Public Office*, 62 AM. J. POL. SCI. 369, 378 (2018).

65. David E. Broockman, *Do Female Politicians Empower Women to Vote or Run for Office? A Regression Discontinuity Approach*, 34 ELECTORAL STUD. 190, 198 (2013); Miguel Carreras, *High-Profile Female Executive Candidates and the Political Engagement of Women*, 70 POL. RES. Q. 172, 179 (2017).

III. WOMEN'S POLITICAL PRIORITIES

One reason for electing women is the idea that women's perspectives might translate into different political priorities. People may assume that if women are descriptively represented—more women are members of the legislature—women will also be substantively represented, and women's interests will be addressed in law and politics.⁶⁶ U.S. women are much more likely to support government spending and safety nets than men, with 58% of women preferring more government services, compared to 37% of men.⁶⁷ U.S. women legislators are also more likely to ask for earmarks on women's issues, such as women's economic initiatives.⁶⁸ Research does suggest that in countries and at times where women make up a larger proportion of the legislature, social spending is greater, including spending on cash benefits to families and social services aimed at families.⁶⁹ While policy priorities may only show this difference in settings where women make up a critical mass of legislators, there does appear to be a link between descriptive and substantive representation.⁷⁰

Looking at U.S. women by party in 2018, there were quite large differences in the issues that animate Democratic and Republican women.⁷¹ Democratic women were much more focused around issues such as healthcare, gender equality, racial equality, LGBT rights, income inequality, and gun regulation, while Republican women were more concerned with terrorism and foreign policy. In the United States, Republican women tend to have views that are substantially more conservative than Democratic women. However, Republican women are

66. See Brian Frederick, *Gender and Roll Call Voting Behavior in Congress: A Cross-Chamber Analysis*, 34 AM. REV. POL. 1, 1–20 (2016); see also Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer & William Mishler, *An Integrated Model of Women's Representation*, 67 J. POL. 407, 407–428 (2005).

67. Hannah Hartig, *Gender Gap Widens in Views of Government's Role—and of Trump*, PEW RES. CTR. (Apr. 11, 2019), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/11/gender-gap-widens-in-views-of-governments-role-and-of-trump/> [<https://perma.cc/JM7J-ADNC>].

68. Schmitt & Brant, *supra* note 47, at 289; Corina Schulze & Jared Hurvitz, *The Dynamics of Earmark Requests for the Women and Men of the US House of Representatives*, 37 J. WOMEN POL. & POL'Y 68, 68–86 (2016).

69. Catherine Bolzendahl, *Beyond the Big Picture: Gender Influences on Disaggregated and Domain-Specific Measures of Social Spending, 1980–1999*, 7 POL. & GENDER 35, 35–70 (2011); Catherine Bolzendahl, *Making the Implicit Explicit: Gender Influences on Social Spending in Twelve Industrialized Democracies, 1980–99*, 16 SOC. POL.: INT'L STUD. GENDER STATE & SOC'Y 40, 40–81 (2009).

70. Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler, *supra* note 66, at 420.

71. See Melissa Deckman, *What Women Want: Issue Priorities for Women Voters in Election 2018*, GENDER WATCH 2018 (Aug. 10, 2018), <http://www.genderwatch2018.org/what-women-want/> [<https://perma.cc/6BGY-SMH8>].

a little more progressive than Republican men. On the other hand, Democratic Party women and men are more comparable.⁷² For example, both men and women affiliated with the Democratic Party tend to favor positions traditionally advocated by women.⁷³ While Republican women as a whole are slightly more progressive than Republican men as a whole, women who are elected lean toward being more conservative.⁷⁴

Many researchers focus on the “gender gap” in voting, which explores how men’s and women’s voting differs. In earlier decades, women’s voting records in industrialized countries appeared somewhat more conservative than men’s voting records. More recent research suggests women in a range of settings are now more likely than men to support progressive positions on social issues.⁷⁵ On the whole, women appear somewhat more progressive than men in recent decades.⁷⁶ While for the last few decades there have been differences in men’s and women’s approval rating of presidents—with higher approval from men for Republican presidents and higher approval from women for Democratic presidents—in recent years, there has been a *much* larger gender gap in presidential approval.⁷⁷ For example, as of April 2019, 47% of men versus 32% of women approved of how Trump was handling his job as President.⁷⁸

The gender gap may reflect that women have become more progressive over time,⁷⁹ men have become increasingly conservative over

72. Tiffany D. Barnes & Erin C. Cassese, *American Party Women: A Look at the Gender Gap Within Parties*, 70 POL. RES. Q. 127, 130 (2017); Alice H. Eagly et al., *Experimental Tests of an Attitudinal Theory of the Gender Gap in Voting*, 29 PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. BULL. 1245, 1253 (2003); Robert E. Hogan, *Sex and the Statehouse: The Effects of Gender on Legislative Roll-Call Voting*, 89 SOC. SCI. Q. 955, 965 (2008).

73. Eagly et al., *supra* note 72, at 1255.

74. Barnes & Cassese, *supra* note 72, at 137.

75. Barnes & Cassese, *supra* note 72, at 130–31; Nathalie Giger, *Towards a Modern Gender Gap in Europe?*, 46 SOC. SCI. J. 474, 474–92 (2009); Ronald Inglehart & Pippa Norris, *The Developmental Theory of the Gender Gap: Women’s and Men’s Voting Behavior in Global Perspective*, 21 INT’L POL. SCI. REV. 441, 458 (2000); Andrej Kokkonen & Lena Wängnerud, *Women’s Presence in Politics and Male Politicians Commitment to Gender Equality in Politics: Evidence from 290 Swedish Local Councils*, 38 J. WOMEN POL. & POL’Y 199, 199–220 (2017); Noelle H. Norton, *Uncovering the Dimensionality of Gender Voting in Congress*, 24 LEGIS. STUD. Q. 65, 65–86 (1999); *Gender in Politics*, *supra* note 8; Schmitt & Brant, *supra* note 47; Schulze & Hurvitz, *supra* note 68; Donley T. Studlar et al., *Explaining the Gender Gap in Voting: A Cross-National Analysis*, 79 SOC. SCI. Q. 779, 779–98 (1998).

76. Deckman, *supra* note 71.

77. Hartig, *supra* note 67.

78. *Id.*

79. See generally Giger, *supra* note 75; Inglehart & Norris, *supra* note 75.

time,⁸⁰ or both processes are occurring. Some research suggests that there is not simply a progressive-conservative divide. This is because there may be a particular dimension to women's support for family planning or family policy that does not fully align with support for progressive social issues.⁸¹

Women legislators' perceived more-progressive perspectives may also be an artifact of more progressive perspectives among their constituencies.⁸² Specific women's political views within parties are not necessarily different from men's views in those parties. Some research finds that there is not a significant difference in the voting records of Republican men and women in the House of Representatives, or in the voting records of Democratic men or women in either the House or the Senate, although there are differences between Republican men and women in the U.S. Senate.⁸³ Research also suggests that Republican women have become increasingly conservative and more comparable to Republican men, making party more important than gender in determining political priorities.⁸⁴

These differences may also impact women's leadership within the legislature. On one hand, Democratic women in the U.S. Senate may find it easier to visibly support women's issues because those issues are also supported by the Democratic party, giving women access to leadership opportunities and greater power in the party.⁸⁵ On the other hand, Republican women who focus on women's issues may be vulnerable to attacks from those with either more or less progressive views, and therefore have fewer opportunities to move into leadership positions.⁸⁶ Republican women may also not benefit from issue competency stereotypes, since "women's issues" are less central to the Republican

80. Karen M. Kaufmann & John R. Petrocik, *The Changing Politics of American Men: Understanding the Sources of the Gender Gap*, 43 AM. J. POL. SCI. 864, 864 (1999).

81. Leslie McCall & Anna Shola Orloff, *The Multidimensional Politics of Inequality: Taking Stock of Identity Politics in the U.S. Presidential Election of 2016*, 68 BRIT. J. SOC. S34, S34–S56 (2017); see generally Norton, *supra* note 75.

82. Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer & Renato Corbetta, *Gender Turnover and Roll-Call Voting in the U.S. House of Representatives*, 29 LEGIS. STUD. Q. 215, 215–29 (2004).

83. See generally Frederick, *supra* note 66.

84. *Id.*; Hogan, *supra* note 72, at 964–66.

85. Michele L. Swers, *Pursuing Women's Interests in Partisan Times: Explaining Gender Differences in Legislative Activity on Health, Education, and Women's Health Issues*, 37 J. WOMEN POL. & POL'Y 249, 249–73 (2016).

86. *Id.*

platform.⁸⁷ Research also suggests that women's involvement in legislative committees reflects gendered expectations, as in Germany where women predominate on committees that address social issues or culture.⁸⁸ In the United States, women legislators have been sidelined from most important committees and appear best represented on committees focused on internal affairs.⁸⁹ Yet in Sweden, women have been more effectively integrated into a variety of legislative committees, even though they are less well-represented on some committees, such as defense.⁹⁰

Some evidence suggests that women are also more likely to work across political parties or other key divides and are more active on bill sponsorships.⁹¹ It appears that women also have somewhat larger political agendas than do men, addressing more policy areas, rather than specializing in a handful.⁹² Women also may be more likely to think through policy priorities through the lens of having been a caregiver⁹³—though this lens can lead to different kinds of perspectives (for example, the importance of supporting the traditional heterosexual male breadwinner family versus the importance of social supports for working families). Generally, research suggests that essentialist approaches to women in politics—those that suggest women are driven by different instincts than men—have found less empirical support than those that take a more nuanced view.⁹⁴

Institutional politics also plays a role in policy adoption on issues that impact women. While having women in legislative positions may mean that there is a wider perspective on issues, this does not necessarily mean that they can speak for all women. Even if women legislators address concerns held by other women, this does not guarantee that those

87. Kira Sanbonmatsu & Kathleen Dolan, *Do Gender Stereotypes Transcend Party?*, 62 POL. RES. Q. 485, 485–94 (2009).

88. Catherine Bolzendahl, *Opportunities and Expectations: The Gendered Organization of Legislative Committees in Germany, Sweden, and the United States*, 28 GENDER & SOC'Y 847, 847–76 (2014).

89. *Id.*

90. *Id.*

91. KELLY DITTMAR et al., CTR. AM. WOMEN & POL., REPRESENTATION MATTERS: WOMEN IN THE U.S. CONGRESS 30 (2017), <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/resources/representationmatters.pdf>; Schmitt & Brant, *supra* note 47.

92. Schmitt & Brant, *supra* note 47.

93. DITTMAR et al., *supra* note 91.

94. Michael A. Peters, *Feminizing World Power: A New Constellation of Women In Politics?*, 6 J. RES. GENDER STUD. 62, 62–68 (2016).

perspectives will triumph in decision-making.⁹⁵ Research suggests that gender needs to be mobilized in a variety of institutional ways to lead to successful legislation.

For example, in many countries there are gender ministries, or women's policy agencies, that ensure that gender is incorporated in government programs and planning. Women's policy agencies can ensure that women's interests around policy regarding, for instance, domestic violence are considered holistically, and not separately, as they relate to criminal justice policies, health policies, employment policies, and housing policies. Women bureaucrats in such agencies, who push toward policy solutions to pressing issues, can help ensure that women's perspectives are not lost.⁹⁶

In many countries, in addition to women's ministries, there is gender mainstreaming, which is aimed at considering how *every* policy has underlying gendered assumptions.⁹⁷ Such approaches suggest that in every domain, not simply the most obvious such as family leave or gendered violence, there are underlying gendered issues, which have led to the dispersion of bureaucrats who consider gender outcomes across many different governmental sectors. Having women's interests directly addressed in government agencies has been critical to developing policies that support gender equality.

At the same time, women's movements outside of formal government are an important piece of the puzzle. Women's movements can pressure both bureaucratic actors within women's ministries or other governmental agencies and legislators to act.⁹⁸ For example, where women in policy agencies consult with members of women's movements, proposals and plans tend to be significantly more effective at addressing the issues faced by women.⁹⁹ Autonomous women's movements can help reframe issues from the standpoint of groups of women, rather than through existing legal and bureaucratic definitions, and place issues onto the political agenda that would otherwise be ignored.¹⁰⁰ As Laurel

95. S. Laurel Weldon, *Beyond Bodies: Institutional Sources of Representation for Women in Democratic Policymaking*, 64 J. POL. 1153, 1153–74 (2003).

96. See generally, DOROTHY M. STETSON & AMY MAZUR, *COMPARATIVE STATE FEMINISM* (1995).

97. Sylvia Walby, *Gender Mainstreaming: Productive Tensions in Theory and Practice*, 12 SOC. POL.: INT'L STUD. GENDER STATE & SOC'Y 321, 321–43 (2005); see generally *POLITICS, GENDER, AND CONCEPTS: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY* (Gary Goertz & Amy G. Mazur eds., 2008).

98. Weldon, *supra* note 95.

99. *Id.* at 1161–62.

100. *Id.*

Weldon argues, strong, autonomous women's movements "magnif[y] women's voice inside government."¹⁰¹

For example, in predicting government support for domestic violence policy, countries with a strong women's movement, working in conjunction with a governmental agency, are most likely to develop this support.¹⁰² Similarly, quota systems are much more effective when adoption and implementation include women's lobbies.¹⁰³ By focusing on this "triangle of empowerment," incorporating women's movements, women's agencies, and women legislators, researchers are better able to identify how legislation that focuses on gender equality gets adopted.¹⁰⁴ By focusing only on women politicians, and ignoring the broader context of the bureaucracy and the women's movement, scholars may miss how and why successful policy change occurs.

IV. DIVERSITY IN WOMEN'S POLITICS

Women are diverse in many ways, including in their class backgrounds, race and ethnicity, sexuality, citizenship status, ability status, age, and many other factors.¹⁰⁵ Attending to the diversity of women's experiences is another important component in understanding women's engagement with politics. Women cannot act to represent the interests of *all* women (just as men cannot act to represent the interests of all people, or all men), but may be more likely to understand and consider the interests of women who share similar backgrounds and experiences.

101. *Id.* at 1162.

102. Candice D. Ortals et al., *Politics Close to Home: The Impact of Meso-level Institutions on Women in Politics*, 42 PUBLIUS: J. FEDERALISM 78, 78–107 (2011); see generally *Gender in Politics*, *supra* note 8; Weldon, *supra* note 95.

103. Liza M. Mügge & Silvia Erzeel, *Double Jeopardy or Multiple Advantage? Intersectionality and Political Representation*, 69 PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS 499, 499–511 (2016).

104. See generally, DREW HALFMANN, DOCTORS AND DEMONSTRATORS: HOW POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS SHAPE ABORTION LAW IN THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN, AND CANADA (2011); NIJEHOLT GEERTJE LYCKLAMA À ET AL., WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND PUBLIC POLICY IN EUROPE, LATIN AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN (1998); STETSON & MAZUR, *supra* note 96.

105. See Nadia E. Brown, *Political Participation of Women of Color: An Intersectional Analysis*, 35 J. WOMEN POL. & POL'Y 315, 315–48 (2014); Elizabeth Evans, *Diversity Matters: Intersectionality and Women's Representation in the USA and UK*, 69 PARLIAMENTARY AFF. 569, 569–85 (2016); McCall & Orloff, *supra* note 81; Nira Yuval-Davis, *Intersectionality and Feminist Politics*, 13 EUR. J. WOMEN'S STUD. 193, 193–209 (2006).

Some evidence suggests that less advantaged subgroups are less well represented politically.¹⁰⁶

Thinking intersectionally may help explain what appear to be puzzles. For example, in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, many scholars assumed that women would vote for Hillary Clinton, rather than Donald Trump, because Clinton is a woman, and had emphasized policy support for issues faced by many women, including family leave and childcare.¹⁰⁷ Yet, many White women—particularly those who were less well-educated—voted for Trump, despite reports of his sexist behaviors and attitudes.¹⁰⁸ Women were not simply activated as women voters, but as *White* lower and middle class women who read Trump's policies as more advantageous to their households than Clinton's.

Political structures can matter for how and when diverse women are incorporated into political systems. For example, gender quota systems tend to incorporate women from the majority group, unless they explicitly address race, ethnicity, and gender, or intersect with other factors focused on ensuring diversity not only by gender.¹⁰⁹ While gender quota systems do not necessarily prevent, for example, racial or ethnic minority women from being elected, the quota system plays out in relation to other factors that may lead to racial/ethnic minority women being elected—or not.¹¹⁰ Similarly, the structure of women's movements and the ways in which these movements are alert to diversity also can play an important role in whether diverse women are incorporated into electoral processes.¹¹¹

Just as women generally face gendered stereotypes regarding their suitability for politics, women candidates also face stereotypes regarding race, sexuality, and other elements of their background. Stereotypes can operate in complex ways. Some research, for example, suggests that ethnic minority women face greater prejudice in candidate selection processes than either white women or ethnic minority men—and thus need to have higher qualifications and resources to win elections.¹¹² Yet, in

106. Dara Z. Strolovitch, *Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender*, 68 J. POL. 894, 894–910 (2006).

107. See generally McCall & Orloff, *supra* note 81.

108. *Id.*

109. Karen Celis et al., *Intersectional Puzzles: Understanding Inclusion and Equality in Political Recruitment*, 11 POL. & GENDER, 765–70 (2015) [hereinafter *Intersectional Puzzles*]; *Intersectionality*, *supra* note 30; Karen Celis et al., *Quotas and Intersectionality: Ethnicity and Gender in Candidate Selection*, 35 INT'L POL. SCI. REV. 41, 41–54 (2014) [hereinafter *Quotas and Intersectionality*].

110. See generally *Quotas and Intersectionality*, *supra* note 109.

111. Evans, *supra* note 105, at 113–16.

112. See generally Mügge & Erzeel, *supra* note 103.

certain contexts ethnic minority women may be advantaged in political systems, especially where ethnic minority women are seen as less threatening to existing power structures.¹¹³ Gay and lesbian candidates are more likely to be viewed as “less honest,” “less moral,” and “less strong”; interestingly, women respondents are less likely to stereotype lesbian candidates than gay candidates, although men respondents equally stereotype gay and lesbian candidates.¹¹⁴ Women respondents also are more likely than men respondents to think that lesbian candidates might be better suited than gay men candidates to address policy issues such as education—which may be stereotyped as “feminine”—as well as military spending—perhaps due to the fact that they view lesbians as more masculinized.¹¹⁵

Women may also differ in how they are politically active. Currently in the United States, women appear to be more likely to vote than co-ethnic men.¹¹⁶ Yet, in the United States, White and Asian women appear to be more politically active than Black and Latina women, although Black women attend rallies at similar levels as White and Asian women.¹¹⁷ Asian and White women are much more likely to contact government officials or give money to political campaigns, likely in part because they also tend to have higher levels of education and income; they also are more likely to be contacted by a political party.¹¹⁸

Women of color, sexual minority women, disabled women, and younger women are underrepresented in the U.S. Congress.¹¹⁹ Yet, women of color are better represented in relation to men of color in elected office, than White women are in relation to White men.¹²⁰ Women of color’s representation in political office in the United States has been exceptionally slow, yet appears to be increasing.¹²¹ As of 2019, forty-

113. See *Intersectional Puzzles*, *supra* note 109, at 768. See generally CHRISTINA E. BEJARANO, *THE LATINA ADVANTAGE: GENDER, RACE, AND POLITICAL SUCCESS* (2013); Mügge & Erzeel, *supra* note 103.

114. BEJARANO, *supra* note 113.

115. *Id.*

116. Jane Junn, *Making Room for Women of Color: Race and Gender Categories in the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election*, 5 *POL. & GENDER* 105, 105–10 (2009).

117. Brown, *supra* note 105, at 325 tbl.1.

118. *Id.* at 326–29.

119. See generally Evans, *supra* note 105.

120. See Kira Sanbonmatsu, *The Candidacies of U.S. Women of Color for Statewide Executive Office*, *AM. POL. SCI. ASS’N* 1 (2013), at 3.

121. Mary Hawkesworth, *Congressional Enactments of Race-Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced-Gendered Institutions*, 97 *AM. POL. SCI. REV.* 529, 529–50 (2003); Sanbonmatsu, *supra* note 120, at 40.

seven women of color serve in the U.S. Congress, one Republican and forty-six Democrats.¹²² Similarly, in statewide positions, women of color have been more successful in the Democratic party.¹²³

Women of color who have been elected often experience marginalization, invisibility, and exclusion from leadership opportunities.¹²⁴ While men of color also experience discrimination, they report lower levels of discrimination than women of color.¹²⁵ For example, African American Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, who served in the House for six terms, routinely faced guards who did not believe that she was a member of Congress.¹²⁶ Similarly, while women of color were central to the fight for a higher minimum wage in 1996, when the legislation was enacted, men were the only spokespeople at the press conference.¹²⁷

Women of color often frame their work as not simply focused on women's issues, but on the experiences of women from their backgrounds. There is evidence that women of color are somewhat more likely to take more progressive views than either White women or men of color in the United States. For example, Shirley Chisholm, who was the first Black woman elected to Congress in 1968, and who ran for the Democratic party nomination for presidency in 1972, actively campaigned focusing on messages of inclusion and social justice.¹²⁸ Chisholm, like other Black women legislators, emphasized her identity as a Black woman and a descendent of working-class immigrants, while also "emphasizing the common desire of all Americans to lead healthy and productive lives—equally protected by the laws of the land."¹²⁹

Women of color in U.S. Congress tend to be somewhat more focused on social justice issues such as a reasonable minimum wage and the social safety net.¹³⁰ Because women of color are more likely to represent communities of color, as well as communities that have been underserved,

122. *Women of Color in Elective Office 2019*, CTR. FOR AM. WOMEN & POLITICS, RUTGERS UNIV., <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/women-color-elective-office-2019> [<https://perma.cc/Y6D6-82VL>].

123. Sanbonmatsu, *supra* note 120, at 40.

124. Hawkesworth, *supra* note 121, at 529.

125. David Hedge et al., *Accounting for the Quality of Black Legislative Life: The View from the States*, 40 AM. J. POL. SCI. 82, 82–98 (1996).

126. Hawkesworth, *supra* note 124, at 534.

127. *Id.*

128. Tammy L. Brown, "A New Era in American Politics": *Shirley Chisholm and the Discourse of Identity*, 31 CALLALOO 1013, 1014 (2008).

129. *Id.*

130. DITTMAR et al., *supra* note 91, at 39; Hawkesworth, *supra* note 121, at 537.

they can have different priorities from other legislators. For example, all of the women of color in Congress voted against the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, because it was not based on either social science research or the experiences of their constituents.¹³¹ While they lost this battle and were sidelined from the discussion, they had strong criticisms of the way the debate was carried out.¹³²

There are also important differences among politicians of color. For example, research shows that while Black politicians are more likely than White politicians to show support of Black centered social movements like “Black Lives Matter,” Black women politicians are more likely than Black men politicians to show support for movements more specifically focused on Black women, such as “Say Her Name.”¹³³ Black women politicians also have to work harder to gain power in Congress. For example, Black women in state legislatures are much less likely than Black men to serve on committees governing taxes and spending.¹³⁴ Women of color also note that it is much more challenging for them to raise money—which often translates into leadership positions with greater power in their parties.¹³⁵

CONCLUSION

It appears that the United States has many more barriers to women’s leadership to overcome in the next one hundred years. While women increasingly vote, women are underrepresented in both state and national legislative positions.¹³⁶ While women have made substantial progress in the public realm, the structure of the political system may be hampering women’s opportunities to be successfully elected to political office.¹³⁷ There is some evidence that stereotypes are waning,¹³⁸ and women—at least from the Democratic party, whose platforms align more clearly with

131. Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104–193, 110 Stat. 2105.

132. DITTMAR et al., *supra* note 91; Hawkesworth, *supra* note 121.

133. Christopher T. Stout et al., *#Blackrepresentation, Intersectionality, and Politicians’ Responses to Black Social Movements on Twitter*, 22 MOBILIZATION: INT’L Q. 493, 493–509 (2017).

134. Hedge et al., *supra* note 124, at 92.

135. DITTMAR et al., *supra* note 91, at 43.

136. *See generally Gender in Politics*, *supra* note 8.

137. *Id.*

138. Dolan & Lynch, *supra* note 52, at 583.

issues understood as affecting women—are more likely to be elected.¹³⁹ This suggests that U.S. women may begin approaching parity in representation in the coming decades.

Women's perspectives appear to be somewhat more progressive on social issues than men's perspectives, although party appears to be more important than gender in determining policy priorities.¹⁴⁰ Structures that facilitate politics that incorporate gender more consistently in policies include women's ministries,¹⁴¹ gender mainstreaming,¹⁴² and strong and autonomous women's movements.¹⁴³ Electing women to the legislature does not, in and of itself, lead to changing political priorities. In settings that also have strong women's movements and bureaucratic structures focused on gender, issues that affect women are more likely to be addressed.¹⁴⁴

Finally, there are also important differences among women, by race or ethnicity, class background, sexuality, disability, and other factors, that may lead to different sets of political priorities.¹⁴⁵ Political structures such as quota systems need to be set up to explicitly incorporate factors such as race, ethnicity, and gender, or they may end up incorporating only minority men or majority women.¹⁴⁶ Women of color tend to experience greater marginalization and fewer leadership opportunities.¹⁴⁷

While the Nineteenth Amendment opened the doors to greater women's engagement in U.S. politics, there is still some way to go before women are equally represented in politics, and women from marginalized groups have the opportunities that men from majority groups do. However, there are changes to political structures that the United States could adopt to ensure greater diversity in political participation, which may lead to greater opportunities for women in the second century of women's suffrage.

139. Swers, *supra* note 85, at 252.

140. Deckman, *supra* note 71.

141. STETSON & MAZUR, *supra* note 96.

142. *See generally* Walby, *supra* note 97.

143. Weldon, *supra* note 95, 1161–62.

144. *Id.*

145. *See generally* Yuval-Davis, *supra* note 105.

146. *See generally* Quotas and Intersectionality, *supra* note 109.

147. Hawkesworth, *supra* note 121, at 529.