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UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

by

Lindsey Crane

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate School,  
the College of Arts and Sciences  
and the School of Social Science and Global Studies  
at The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts

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## ABSTRACT

In this project I studied why women are underrepresented in state legislatures. I conducted a data set ranging from 2000 to 2018 for forty-three US states, analyzing the percentage of women who won and the number of women who ran in the elections. Using this data, I found evidence that personal life choices have the most effect on rather women want to run for political office and successfully pursue political careers. Having this specific quantitative dataset, the study provides a better understanding to why women are still widely underrepresented on the state level. I also find that my independent variables effect my dependent variables differently with different significances; thus, women's influences in running for office and winning elections are different. However, fertility rates negatively affect both dependent variables, women running and women winning elections. Women tend to separate their private choices of having a family before or after having political careers, resulting in a lack of female candidates and winners. Essentially, underrepresentation in female political contenders is due to their personal choice of opting out of a political career.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>IV</i>	Independent Variables
<i>DV</i>	Dependent Variables
<i>GOP</i>	Grand Old Party (Republican Party)
<i>N</i>	Number
<i>CAWP</i>	Center for American Women in Politics
<i>CDC</i>	Center for Disease Control
<i>AERA</i>	American Equal Rights Association
<i>VRA</i>	Voting Rights Act
<i>Diffdemminusgop</i>	Difference between female Democrat and Republican candidates
<i>Voter turnout (F)</i>	Female Voter Turnout



## CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

During the American Revolution, the ideal that all men are created equal within certain inalienable rights was an issue that was undecided upon when creating the Constitution. Women like Abigail Adams believed that women's rights should be among those rights. Adams fought for women's rights through her husband John Adams when the founders were creating a new Republic at the nation's Constitutional convention. Her campaign was based on Mary Wollstonecraft's belief that rights should refer to humankind, not just men, to create freedom and equality for all men and women alike. The philosophy of a free and equal society, in the state of nature, came from theoretical ideas of admired American political thinkers like John Locke and Thomas Jefferson (Shanley 1988, 1). Unfortunately, John Adams, along with the other founders, failed to provide women's rights in America's founding Constitution (Shanley 1988, 1). The fight for women's suffrage had just started in American politics.

On July 19, 1848, the American women's rights movement, led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, officially started. That day over three hundred men and women gathered in Seneca Falls, NY to protest legal, economic, and social subordinations of women (Shanley 1988, 1-2). This was a revolution America had never experienced and it exposed many inequalities. The movement adopted a "Declaration of Sentiments," borrowing pieces of the Declaration of Independence. The campaign resembled liberal traditionalists' basis of natural rights and government by consent. It focused on "women's lack of vote, and the common law doctrine of spousal unity which took away a woman's separate legal status when she marries" (Shanley 1988, 2). Women were basically under the legal control of men. Seneca Falls had marked the American

government as unjust for its allowance of sexual double-standards and sexual domination of women. The women who initiated the movement were mostly middle-class white women, and they were protesting based on experiences of injustices, however the movement was also promoted by ex-slaves and abolitionists, men and women alike.

Ex-slaves like Sojourner Truth connected both women's rights and black rights, "charging white males to relinquish even a bit of their power and authority" (Shanley 1988, 2). For others like Fredrick Douglass, "it was shared values rather than a shared relationship to material resources that brought these women's rights advocates together at Seneca Falls" (Wellman 1991, 10). Equality was central in the lives of women and blacks, bringing them together for a stronger fight. Civil rights and women's suffrage combined created an expansive social movement (Wellman 1991, 11). The expansion of the Seneca Falls movement created a period where women's rights and abolition slowly campaigned for more rights over the years, liberalizing laws for both groups (Shanley 1988, 3; Wellman 1991, 10-11). This movement was recreating the American image, especially the idea of women being under patriarchal control to seeing them as an equal.

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 caused the entire nation to turn all attention to war and slavery, suspending women's rights efforts until the pressure and hostilities of the war stopped (Shanley 1988, 3). Nevertheless, the blacks and women's rights groups collided when campaigning constitutional amendments. Stanton, alongside other feminists, campaigned for American Equal Rights Association (AERA) where they denounced the wording of "male" in the Fourteenth Amendment. After Congress refused to link black suffrage and women's suffrage when enacting the Fourteenth Amendment,

Fredrick Douglas “reluctantly accepted the necessity of reorganizing that this was the “Negro’s hour,” and of working later for women’s enfranchisement” (Shanley 1988, 8). Although the bitter strife divided a long-time ally, women never ceased to work toward their equality and suffrage. In 1869, the territory of Wyoming gave full suffrage to women, followed by the territory of Utah in 1870 and then 15 other states, with 13 of these in the West (Moehling and Thomasson 2020, 3). On the other hand, “many more had given women partial suffrage, allowing them to vote in municipal or school elections and, in some cases, US presidential elections” (Moehling and Thomasson 2020, 3).

After nearly eighty years of protesting, picketing the White House, suffrage parades, petitions, and campaigning for their right to suffrage, women gained their right to vote. On August 18, 1920, the United States ratified the Nineteenth Amendment, granting American women suffrage when the Tennessee House of Representatives voted to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution (Moehling and Thomasson 2020, 3). Although this ratification was a landmark moment in history, it would be several decades before all women, particularly women of color, were able to exercise their voting rights. For example, in 1924, the Snyder Act granted Native Americans citizenship rights, including the right to vote. The Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965 sought to overcome legal barriers at state and local levels that prevented racial minorities, especially black voters in the South from voting (Sinzdak 2020).

Although women were given the right to vote, it did not mean they would be represented by a woman. According to McConnaughy, “politicians viewed women as encompassing too much variation for their votes to be viewed as a coalition; many believed they would vote as their husbands, so the vote would just be doubled” (2013,

252). This would not affect representation nor policies. Women were not viewed as a threat for change, the suffrage extension merely suggested that groups in power extend voting rights to promote their policy agendas or to capture votes from political rivals (Moehling and Thomasson 2020, 20).

After the 1920 election, the outcome was a return to “normalcy,” not a revolution (Keyssar 2009, 175). It was clear that women’s political interests were as varied as those of men, and that women were not going to pose a real threat to the political system. After the initial hype of women’s suffrage and politicians striving for their votes, women’s issues were put aside (Moehling and Thomasson 2020, 20-21). Women’s issues were not only put to the side but women faced great inequalities including political representation. According to Clark, many theories have been developed to explain women’s political underrepresentation from political culture, socialization, and role conflicts that have all influenced women's representation. Discrimination against women by political elites and voters has also existed, and the political structure itself formed barriers to the election of women (1991, 63).

From the 1920s until the 1960s and 1970s there were few female politicians to hold office. For example, there were only fourteen female senators during that time period, and some were there as place holders, in some cases only for a day to two weeks, until a man could take office (US Senate 2020; CAWP 2020; Poggione 2012). However, since 1975, the height of a women's movement “provided impetus for the steady growth in the numbers of women in office” (Clark 1991, 63). For instance, as of 1991, women constituted 18% of state legislatures, 17% state executives, 9% county governing boards,

and 14% of mayors and city councils (Clark 1991, 63). Over the next several decades, women's representation continues to increase though it is at a slow rate.

Women make up 51% of the United States population and continue to make significant progress within education, professional, and economic attainment, but have yet to achieve adequate representation in politics. In 2018, women only represented 20-25% of elected officeholders at both the state, local and national level (Dolan and Hansen 2018, 668). Though these numbers are low, they are higher than they have ever been. Over the recent years, women's political representation has increased in both Congress and state legislatures. This provides women better representation at both national and state levels. However, their representation is still widely low. In 2009, women's representation was less than 17% in Congress, though representation varies greatly between southern and nonsouthern states. For example, in the 2009 Congress "9.2% of U.S. House seats in southern states were occupied by women compared to 20.1% in nonsouthern states," which is analyzed and broken down to be about 5.4% southern and 20.3% in nonsouthern states in the average proportion (Poggione 2012, 180). According to Poggione (2012), in the same year women held 18% of the twenty-two southern Senate seats and 17% of the seventy-eight nonsouthern Senate seats (180). By 2016 and 2017, all women made up around 20% of the United States Congress (Sweet-Cushman 2016, 1; Karpowitz, Monson, and Preece 2017, 927). However, women's representation at state level is higher than national percentages.

Nationally women are better represented at the state level, but that does not include the South. On average, Southern states are relatively low in representing women in state legislatures. In 2009, 19% of southern state legislatures were made up of women,

while 26% of nonsouthern state legislatures were made up of women (Poggione 2012, 187-188). In 2017, women made up 24% of all U.S. state legislatures, a slight increase from 2000 when they made up 22% (Karpowitz, Monson, and Preece 2017, 927; Osborn 2014, 146). Political scientists have recently sought explanations for the underrepresentation of women in legislatures. To understand why women are still underrepresented in twenty-first century America, much of the research has focused on variables such as ambition and efficacy, recruitment and gender stereotypes.

Women's representation is widely known, yet women are still underrepresented at a significant level. Based on previous statistical numbers it is found that this is an everlasting struggle for women, and it has yet to dramatically change. Previous scholars have analyzed why women are underrepresented primarily through qualitative studies based on societal stereotypes and partisan preferences and various studies based on previous political offices at both state and national levels. In these studies, scholars analyzed why women are underrepresented by broadly examining female candidates and office holders through previous official political seats and theoretical reasonings to why women do not win or run. These studies do not examine through specific yet generalized characteristics of the women running and women having successful careers.

Previous literature does not cover generalized quantitative studies based on particular independent and dependent variable to explain women's underrepresentation. Thus, I chose my analytical study of quantitative examination through linear regressions, to have specific while also generalized analyses of why women run and win political offices. In this study, I take previous literature to form an understanding of why women are underrepresented. Then, I am able to form hypotheses around the understanding and

finally able to academically choose how to proceed with my chosen variables and regressions based on previous studies.

I used this project to study why women are underrepresented in state legislatures from 2000 to 2018. My dataset was based on fertility, poverty, and marriage rates, religious adherents, female voter turnout, the difference between Democrat and Republican female candidates, state populations (independent variables; IV), and percentage of women who won an election and the number of women who ran (dependent variables; DV). I ran two different linear regression that specifically calculated potential causations to the percentage of women who won an election and the number of women who ran. Provided that I analyzed the number of women who ran, it gave a deeper understanding of women's tradeoffs and personal choices when deciding to run for political office. As for the percentage of women who won, it gave a deeper understanding to a woman's advantages in winning an election. The study ultimately provided an understanding of women's underrepresentation in the United States based on why they run for office and why they win their election.

## CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

Because the number of women in elective office has stalled, scholars have begun to explore the reasons for women's continued underrepresentation. Some scholars argue that social stereotypes of women have led voters to stereotype female candidates as insufficiently tough, lacking leadership skills, or poorly suited in handling the supposed masculine issues, such as economics or national security, which are often at the center of political debates and discussion (Thomsen 2015, 295-323). Others have been engaged in a vigorous discussion debating if gender bias on the campaign trail makes it harder for women to win when they decide to run for office and if difficulties while in office also lead to less women running. This chapter will examine some of this research.

### Running for Office

Even when controlling for objective qualifications, women are still less likely than men to run for office. Explanations for this include risk assessment, stereotyping and patterns of political recruitment (Sweet-Cushman, 2016; Fox & Lawless 2010;310-326; Sanbonmatsu, 2006; Kanthak and Woon, 2015; Schneider, Holman, Diekman, and McAndrew 2005, 515-531). Sweet-Cushman addresses the issue of risk assessment and she makes an interesting, if controversial argument. She argues that men have always had an advantage by virtue of biology. Because women and men have been subject to different evolutionary pressures, they have evolved different cognitive and cultural responses to environmental pressures associated with gender-based differences in politics that are still reflected today (Sweet-Cushman 2016, 5). One suggestion she makes is that women and men have different levels of risk assessment. Because “women and men have been subject to different evolutionary pressures, they have evolved different cognitive



mechanisms of risk assessments” that have affected their abilities and willingness to participate in politics (Sweet-Cushman 2016, 6). Cognitive studies suggest that family responsibilities prompt women to calculate risks in different ways than men, especially when considering their involvement in public life (politics) (Sweet-Cushman 2016, 6-8). Women have been socialized to put family obligations foremost (Sweet-Cushman 2016, 6-8). Therefore, women take on fewer dominating roles in society which gave them fewer benefits when participating. (Sweet-Cushman 2016, 6-8). Women, in this case, are viewed to have less willingness to leave the home life to become involved in the political domain (Sweet-Cushman 2016, 6-8). Their roles as mothers and wives sometimes outweigh their willingness to run, thus men benefit from their risk propensity in today’s society (Sweet-Cushman 2016, 5).

Another explanation for the lack of women in legislative office is that factors such as stereotyping has made them less likely to run for office. Historically, women have been forced to be the nurturers of family life, while men have been required to be the providers of the family and its representative in public life. According to Sweet-Cushman, this began during the Neolithic, when women and men were designated to their places in the social order through their biological characteristics (2016, 5-7)<sup>1</sup>. She suggests that these gender stereotypes now affect their roles in the political domain. Men have less of an obligation to nurture but more responsibilities when it comes to providing

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<sup>1</sup> Sweet-Cushman’s argument would be challenged by most Neolithic gender scholars who view gender as a social construct rather than a biological phenomenon.

for their families. This allows them to have more powerful positions in their societies based on their masculine success (Sweet-Cushman 2016, 5-7).

One example of such stereotyping is for male politicians have stay-at-home wives to manage their households, whereas female politicians are viewed as having abandoned the traditional family role in preference of having a public life (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018, 528). These accusations stereotype female politicians as unconventional, but for men, it is the natural order of things. Although traditional stereotypes of women merely having a place within the home have begun to diminish, Sweet-Cushman continues to argue that women still feel the pressures of needing to put their home lives first (Sweet-Cushman 2016, 1-3). According to Sweet-Cushman, “women are more likely than men to feel that their political involvement is limited by having children...and more likely to delay a run for office until their children are grown” (2016, 2). Again, when they choose to have political careers before having families; they are assumed to have a nontraditional lifestyle compared to their male counterparts (Sweet-Cushman 2016, 2). Indeed, Karpowitz, et al. supports Sweet-Cushman with their finding that “women tend to make decisions about running for office through a relationally embedded process where decisions are sensitive to social cues and relationships rather than one based on spontaneous political ambition” (2018, 928). Female candidates are more likely to adhere to social stereotypes of their nurturing expectations causing them to hold back from participating.

Karpowitz, et al. also note that when examining the demand side of women politicians, it is believed that women’s underrepresentation is due to the belief that women are not viable enough to become productive politicians (2018, 929). Karpowitz,

et al. found that barriers come from the perception “that male characteristics are more important than female characteristics in politics[and]these ideals often hurt voters’ perceptions of female candidates,” (2018, 929). On the other hand, according to Dolan, “women have moved out of the private sphere and into the public over the past thirty to forty years, and academic work suggests an easing of stereotypes and an increase in egalitarian attitudes toward women candidates” (2014, 98). Several studies, both experimental and observational, support Dolan and have shown that stereotypes do not negatively affect female candidates’ prospects, and stereotypes do not lead electorates to hold women to higher standards during their campaign (Brooks 2011, 602-613; Brooks, 2013; Dolan, 2014; Fridkin and Kenney, 2014; Hayes 2011, 137-160; Hayes, Lawless, and Baitinger 2014, 1197-1210).

One question addressed by the research is whether female candidates still face issues that stem from their stereotyped abilities and competencies, which cause biases when compared to their male counterparts (Dolan 2014, 97). Certain actions of men are found acceptable within politics, while when a woman is found in the same situation is condemned. In Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth’s research, they find that their study corresponds with various 2018 studies by Barnes, Beaulieu, Saxton, Eggers, Vivyan, and Wagner (2018). These studies conclude that behavior with negative traits, like corruption scandals or affairs, men are penalized less harshly than women in the same situations (Teale, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018, 528). For instance, it might be expected that a female candidate would face more degradation had she mothered children with several fathers, while a man might more easily be accepted and forgiven for multiple marriages and affairs (2018, 528).

In addition, scholars have even found that women need to be more qualified in order to succeed in politics, while men are more easily accepted on potential. Several studies of United States elections have highlighted the fact that women politicians are more qualified than men (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018, 528). This shows that double standards and biases still exist within the political domain, even though it may be unconscious judgments. Both studies by Dolan revealed that examining the realities of women's suppression in politics has become more difficult to understand. As a result, it can be assumed that people subconsciously evaluate and acknowledge stereotypes and prejudices before nominating a candidate on election day; thus, "gender stereotypes may exert an influence on other stages of the electoral process, perhaps when women make choices about how to campaign or even when they decide whether to run at all" (Dolan, 2014, 105).

Historically, political agendas have typically been categorized by stereotypes, men are preferred when they campaign on monetary and military policies and women for educational and healthcare policies (Dolan 2014, 96-98). According to Thomsen (2015), ambition and party recruitment rationales cause women's underrepresentation as it seeks to account for the growing partisan disparity among women in Congress by placing ideology front and center (314). The study also suggests that there is an increase in asymmetric polarization that will cause moderate Republican women to be largely absent from the policymaking process. However, conservative female (and male) state legislators are more likely to run for Congress over liberal men and women, giving conservatives a higher probable representation rate. If the study is correct and conservative women continue moving more towards the right, the partisan disparity

among women in Congress should fade and patterns of women's representation in both parties should follow similar trajectories (Thomsen 2015, 309; 315).

Yet, Dolan found that voters' perceptions of gendered stereotypes in deciding whether women or men are better at managing particular policy areas or providing greater leadership or compassion are not related to a candidate of choice in local House election; instead, their primary and dominant influence is their preferred political party (2014, 103). These studies suggest that women have come to acquire more respect in politics over recent years than ever before when given the opportunity. Women who run for office win at the same rate as similarly situated men, and that the small number of women candidates explains women's underrepresentation (Dolan 2014, 97). Karpowitz, Monson, and Preece even acknowledged that voters do not discriminate against women on the ballot, and having additional women on the ballot increases the probability that a woman will become elected (2017, 939).

It is important to note that scholars have considered the fact that stereotypes are one potential influence (though very small) against female candidates, and that several more political variables that have shown to have more causation to their underrepresentation (Dolan 2014, 104). Perhaps one of the most important issues surrounding the number of women running for office is recruitment by the parties. One interesting finding is that voters have very different explanations for the lack of women candidates. Republicans tend to blame women for their decision in choosing not to run for office on their personal choices, while Independents and Democrats place the blame on the system for discrimination against women in public life and the perception that men are more suitable for the job. Nevertheless, no matter where the blame is placed scholars

consistently agree that “political party efforts to recruit women are likely to play an important role in increasing women’s representation” (Dolan and Hansen 2018, 675; Karpowitz, et al. 2018, 929). No matter what political parties assume to be the central issue to why women are not represented, their goals should be to recruit more women to provide them with a better chance of having more representation.

Political parties have significant influence when it comes to recruiting political candidates due to their recruiting abilities and their practices can have an effect on women’s political ambitions (Dolan and Hansen 2018, 677). Parties do recruit women though rates vary based on vacant seats. Dolan and Hansen refer to various studies by Falk, Greenlee, Holman and Sickle-Ward which reveals that “messages about women and women’s place in political life come from many sources and can saturate our elections, which can have an impact on how electors perceive women candidates” (2018, 669; Falk 2010; Greenlee, Holman and Sickle-Ward 2016). Previous studies by Dolan (1997), Fox and Oxley (2003), and Sanbonmatsu (2002, 2006), argue that stereotypes do not prohibit women from having competitive and successful campaigns, but their electoral success for various offices is connected to the beliefs of voters, journalists, party leaders, and potential candidates themselves about traditional roles and strengths and weaknesses.

The ideals of the two primary political parties, Republicans and Democrats, are what attract their voters (Dolan 2014, 102, 105). In essence, the distinctions are within voters’ core values and ideals. For example, certain religious groups, like evangelical Christians as well as religious people in general, are clearly and strongly associated with the Republican Party. Accordingly, candidate membership in those religious groups has a substantial influence on the level of partisan voting, increasing support from Republican

identifiers and decreasing it from Democrats (Campbell, et al. 2011, 55). While on the other hand, Democrats find importance in monetary redistributions. For example, the Democratic vote had the highest income-based voting within the southern Black Belt, ranging from Arkansas River to eastern North Carolina (Hersh and Nall 2016, 299-301). Thus, Democratic policies tend to identify with the lower class. The beliefs and values of both parties bring in electorates based on personal preferences in political views, and such morals have been found the most influential regardless of the candidate (Dolan 2014, 105).

Political parties that contribute to specific candidates have the most influence over those preferred contenders regardless of gender. According to Dolan, political influences shape elections in general, that voters' preference in a political party, even if it has a female representative, is more desirable than electing a man from the opposing party (2014, 105). Political parties have come to value their candidates over those of the opposing party. For example, when evaluating the House of Representatives, within their 2010 elections Democratic women have a better chance of becoming nominated over a male Republican and the same observation accounts for those of Republican candidates; therefore, "a shared political party is the most significant influence...and Republican women House members clearly received more positive evaluations than did their male opponents" (Dolan 2014, 102).

#### Women in Office

Women's overall representation had been increasing, but recently it has been relatively stagnant (Karpowitz, Monson, and Preece 2017, 927; Osborn 2014, 146).

Women's representation varies from state to state, for they are widely different. Because

states are made up of various ideologies and customs, each state has different amounts of women legislators, though certain areas tend to have similar rates. For example, “in 2010, 38% of Colorado's legislature was comprised of women, while South Carolina's consisted of only 10%” (Scola 2013, 333). States in the southern parts of the U.S. have more traditional, patriarchal traditions and values versus those of the West. Western states tend to have more liberal customs in which they value more liberal politics and way of life. Even in Northern states like New York (24.1%) and New Jersey (28.3%) where there are more progressive ideologies, women are still widely underrepresented (Scola 2013, 335). There are differences among southern states as well as nationally (Poggione 2012; Scola 2013).

Larger populated southern states like Texas and Florida have more women in office. Other states like Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi did not have any female representatives in the 111th Congress. However, about 43% of all women who have served in the House and 58% of women who served in the Senate from southern states were appointed or won a special election, which is higher than those of nonsouthern states at 18% House and 42% Senate. Interestingly, 22% of southern women entered Congress by succeeding their deceased husbands, while only 11% nonsouthern women entered the same way (Poggione 2012, 182, 185-186). Nuwer's (2000) theory agrees with Poggione's, that these differences do occur, that larger states like Texas are less conservative and less accepting of traditional gender roles. This suggests that political parties play a part in southern states just as in southern and nonsouthern states alike.

Female state legislators are more successful when they are included in the social eligibility pool, where there are higher levels of educated women and work participation,



especially lawyers and business executives (Hill 1981; Nelson 1991; Nechemias 1987; Welch 1978; Welch and Studlar 1996; Williams 1990). For instance, women are more likely to become elected in “states with higher percentages of professional women, higher levels of liberal political ideologies...and those with a moralistic political culture” (Scola 2013, 341-342). For example, in 2009, women held 16% committee chair positions in southern states, while 23 and 28% in nonsouthern states. These differences can be explained by party control. Women’s concentration is in the Democratic party and the majority of the South is Republican which caused limitations for women (Poggione 2012, 190). Women are valued more within states that allow them to have a voice without judgment; thus, they can better represent women in liberal states. Women have a better chance in office when identifying as a Democrat, but the high electoral advantages of the Republican party decrease their chance; though, women are more concentrated in the Democrat Party in both Congressional houses, averaging at 70% (Poggione 2012, 187,189). Women are represented in both parties, just not equally.

Just as there is variation in state statistics, there is also disparity amongst women based on ethnic differences. As reported by Scola, women of color only made up 4.8% of state legislatures with Native Americans serving in only seven states and blacks serving in just thirty-eight (2013, 336). These numbers are rationalized through the idea that women of color are minorities; therefore, they only require a small amount of representation, but not all states have small amounts of minority women. In those states, they are better represented based on their populations. Women of color are more likely to become legislators within states that have higher levels of minority populations despite traditional values and ideologies in places like Georgia, Texas, and Mississippi (Scola

2013, 335-336, 343). White women have higher representation rates in states that are not ethnically diverse. Women are not adequately represented but are represented based on their racial populations (Scola 2013, 335-339). Altogether, scholars have found that “women in the United States comprise about twenty to twenty-five percent of elected officeholders, from local to national office” (Dolan and Hansen 2018, 668). Although women are increasingly gaining the vote, when they become elected their political goals vary based on political parties.

After women are elected, their partisan affiliation affects their legislative goals. Political parties have historically sided with particular legislation (Republicans favor conservative beliefs and Democrats have liberal views), which have affected women’s abilities and opportunities to represent women’s political challenges in some instances. Legislatures enact statutes based on party requests which has consequences for women’s representation. Studies have shown that women legislatures’ agenda for women’s issues are influenced by their party’s agenda (Osborn 2014, 146-148). For example, in the House of Representatives, “Republican women generally introduce a lot less women’s issues legislation than Democratic women do in every state,” but women of both parties introduce a more significant number of women’s bills, such as abortion, family law, domestic violence, and antidiscrimination policies, than men do (Osborn 2014, 147). Because of the different partisan agendas, women’s political goals are widely different. For example, Republican women propose and support Pro-life laws, while Democrats back Pro-choice legislation. Even though both parties have different goals for women, all women legislators want more equality for women; unfortunately, parties can interfere (Osborn 2014, 146-148).

Because the Republican party is based on traditional values, women have become intimidated when pushing for bills on women's issues. For example, in 2002, Swers found that when Republicans have control of the House, moderate Republican women became less likely to support women's issues because of the fear of being negatively scrutinized by their party; however, when Democrats have control, moderate Republican women supported bills that would benefit feminist concerns (Osborn 2014, 147). Party control in the U.S. House determines the likelihood of women's bills being voted into law, wherein the Republican party is less likely to support and enact women's legislation on their own. According to Osborn, there is a lack of evidence that Republican women have acted on strong efforts of passing laws to enhance women's rights (2014, 149). While both Democrats and Republicans consider these issues in need of policy change, Democrats have claimed the traditional caretaking policies. Furthermore, Republican women allowed Democratic women to find solutions to women's issues but will support them when given the right opportunity (Osborn 2014, 14).

Women's increased representation is likely to be a slow process based on socialization and generation replacement. Their own assessments of gendered effects on probability of their success and their gendered expectations will shape their willingness to pursue elected office (Poggione 2012, 198). Aside from structural factors like the absence of gender quotas (O'Brien and Rickne 2016, 120-125) and high re-election rates among incumbents, which are primarily male (Schwindt-Bayer 2005, 121-126), the "prevailing explanation for the continued underrepresentation of women in the United States is the gender gap in political ambition" (Brooks and Hayes 2019, 603). Women in today's

society are less interested in a career within politics and more interested in other professional paths. Thus, many women are just unwilling to do that line of work.

## CHAPTER III - HYPOTHESES

Based on previous theories and basic understandings of the underrepresentation of women, I have multiple hypotheses. The number of women winning can only increase if the number of women running does too. According to recent literature, I hypothesize that representation has continuously stayed low due to women's family duties and their desires to put them first, presenting the idea that American politics lack high number of female candidates. Their findings showed that more women that therefore, I hypothesize that women that have traditional, religious values, the more likely women will prefer to opt out of political office. Previous theories by Karpowitz et al. (2018), Sweet-Cushman (2016), Osborn (2014), Scola (2013), and Poggione (2012) have primarily influenced these hypotheses. Essentially, I hypothesize that still today, America politics lack numbers in female candidates because the majority of women prefer to put home lives ahead of public ones.

### Hypothesis 1

*Higher rates of fertility and marriage leads to lower levels of female representation.*

I expect that female candidates will be less likely to have families, theorizing that women put family lives ahead of political ones. Previous studies have shown that women's underrepresentation is due to a lack of political interests by women like those of Karpowitz et al. (2018) and Sweet-Cushman (2016). These findings suggest that many women pursue lives and careers that adhere to social cues of women being nurtures in the family dynamic, causing them to delay or opt out of political careers. These women, according to Sweet-Cushman, have been socialized to put family first and career second. Women have historically been known for their nurturing abilities which has influenced

their political interest. Historically social cues have affected a woman's choice in society, and based on other studies, they still do. Women are less likely to choose a political career that would prevent them from entirely fulfilling their family obligations.

#### Hypothesis 2

*The greater the number of women who vote, the higher the likelihood of more women in political office.*

Women face the majority of all social and political issues equally; thus, I assume that women support their female peers in order to fix them. Osborn's previous study in 2014 showed that female Republican policymakers support their female Democrat counterparts. The study also stated that female legislators support one another based on the similarities in women's issues from social to political, although their ultimate goals differ based on party agendas. When looking at female support for female representatives as a whole, I expect that women will support female candidates to enhance the probability of adjusting female legislation. Women are known for experiencing a wide range of injustices, while they are also known to support one another in fixing them. The more female voters, the greater the likelihood that women's representation will increase.

#### Hypothesis 3

*The more religious a state is, the lower the number of female representatives.*

I expect that religious states have more male legislators based on their conservative ideals. Scola's 2013 study showed that states with liberal ideologies have more female representation than those of conservative states. In religious states, conservative ideologies are more likely to be represented. For example, Scola's study provided that in 2010 South Carolina's legislature (Republican; conservative) consisted of

only 10% female representation, while liberal states like New York (24.1%) and New Jersey (28.3%) had a great deal more. Poggione's 2012 also supports this hypothesis. The study showed that conservative states like Mississippi and Georgia have failed to elect female representatives. It also stated that women's concentration is in the liberal Democratic party, causing limitations for women in the Republican party. I assume that voters in traditionally conservative states choose to obtain a traditionally conservative political domain. Therefore, I expect states with religious, conservative backgrounds to have a high representation rate for men.

#### Hypothesis 4

*The greater the number of women who run, the higher the likelihood of more women in political office.*

With an increase in female candidates, there will be an increase in female representation. Based on Dolan's study, women have increasingly moved out of the private sphere and into the public over the past thirty to forty years. Academic work suggests an easing of stereotypes and an increase in egalitarian attitudes toward female candidates. This has slowly increased their overall representation. Dolan also states that when women are given the chance, especially when running in higher numbers, they will have a higher success rate. With an increase of female candidates in today's elections, women have a higher representation rate. Nevertheless, the higher the number of women that run for office, the greater likelihood of success.

## CHAPTER IV – DATA, VARIABLES, AND METHODOLOGY

To get a deeper understanding of why women run for state legislative seats and the percentage in which they won, I studied the following variables: fertility, poverty, and marriage rates, religious adherents, voter turnout for women, state population, and the difference between the number of women that ran for each of the two parties. I found the majority of the variables through online databases of Center of American Women in Politics, National Center for Disease Statistics, and Census Bureau; while I found the remainder variables from previous research by Professor Michael P. McDonald and Professor Mark Brockway. In order to generalize this data, I conducted two quantitative analyses. Both studies are important due to their different explanations of women's underrepresentation.

Throughout the literature review, there was much information that led to analyses that women have been discriminated and stereotyped which has caused them to opt out of political careers. I used the analyses to study forty-three of the fifty US states during the years of 2000 to 2018. In the study I gathered each variable for each state and conducted two linear regressions to see if the variables were actually significant to my two questions (percentage of women who won and the number of women who ran). It is expected for women to have varied experiences due to the different variables.

### Dependent Variables

There are two questions to be answered: Why were the percentages of women who won low? Why were the numbers of women who ran for office from 2000 to 2018 low? My findings will give a deeper understanding of why women's underrepresentation is so low and what can and needs to be done to increase their representation in both



political parties. I analyzed why the women that ran for office decided to run, their priorities, and specific choices they make that effects underrepresentation the most. For both dependent variables, the numbers are based on the published information from the CAWP. Because both numbers and calculation came from the same source, it is subjectable to more sufficient findings.

As for the percentage of women who won, I calculated the percentage based on the number of women who ran and the number of women who won in order to examine women's success probability (CAWP 2019). Nevertheless, the number of women who won is divided by the number of women who ran. The calculation shows the percentage, or the rate, of success for female candidates against all running female candidate in each state. These calculations focus on an indication of women's overall probable success rate when running for state house. For the number of women who ran for state legislature, it is simply the added calculation of all female candidates that ran for office during 2000-2018 in the forty-three analyzed states (CAWP 2019). Each number is based on the female state house candidates for the studied years (2000-2018), in which I added each of the studied states' female candidate list for each year. These calculations emphasize on the actual number in which women are ran for state legislative office during the years of 2000 to 2018. Nevertheless, both DVs are needed when highlighting what the possible causes of low female underrepresentation.

#### Independent Variables

For the quantitative tests, I used fertility, poverty, marriage rate, percentage of each state population that claimed to be religious, religious adherents, voter turnout for women, state population, and the difference between the number of women that ran for

each of the two parties. However, in my study, I conducted two tests, where I used state population in the second regression but not the first to avoid any overlaps and false, skewed correlations between state population and the numbers of women who ran for office.

Each of the IVs were chosen based on previous literature and the hypotheses of their probable causations on the DVs. The fertility rate measures the average number of children per woman between the ages of fifteen and forty-four (National Center for Disease Statistics: CDC 2018). The specific ages come from the CDC's age-specific fertility rate (number of births during a reference period of three years preceding the survey divided by the women-years of exposure to childbearing). Therefore, the fertility rate is "the number of births occurring during a given year or a reference period per 1,000 women" (Elkasabi 2019, 3). The women are not only chosen by age, but also by exposure for the specific age group, in single years or five-year age groups. Because of the sampling strategy, the numbers are not exact but estimated through an educated estimation.

The poverty rate is the ratio of the number of people whose income is below the poverty line. The poverty line for the US ranges from \$25,000 to \$30,000 depending on which state a citizen resides. In order to calculate the rate, the ratio of the number of people within each state is taken as half of the median household income of the total population (Census Bureau 2019). As for marriage rates, it comes from the ratio of marriages of a sample of a population within an area or during a particular time period. The rate is typically calculated as the number of marriages every 1,000 people per year (Census Bureau 2019; National Center for Disease Statistics: CDC 2018). It is formed

based on quantitative sampling, resulting in an educated estimation; therefore, it is not specific, just as the fertility rate.

Percent of religious adherents I used Professor Mark Brockway's collected data, which is based on the percentage of a state's population that qualified as religious based on the U.S. religion census from 2000 and 2010 (Brockway 2019). It was calculated based on the U.S. religious census and measured by how the respondents regard themselves as adherents of a religious community from every 1,000 people (Census Bureau 2012, 62). According to Dr. Brockway, it is measured based on a questionnaire in which a citizen chooses rather they are religious or not (2019). It is important to note that the study only has results of those willing to participate and of individuals above the age of 18, the legal age in the US. Because there were only two years, there had to be some educated estimation for the remainder years. However, of the tested years, there was not much change (Brockway 2019).

For female voter turnout, I used data that was already collected by Professor Michael P. McDonald in a 2019 study from the University of Florida through the online database of elect project (McDonald 2019). The turnout rate is based on women that are eligible to vote in an election and those that actually voted. Those that are eligible are of the age of eighteen, have citizenship status, and meet their state's requirements, and registered to vote (except in the state of North Dakota) (USA 2020). It is important to note that the female voter turnout is based estimated and actual numbers of female ballots counted within the studied years (McDonald 2019).

State population, on the other hand, is "the calculated number of people living in an area of a specified point in time, usually July 1st" (Census Bureau 2019). These

estimated populations are calculated by a component of change model that incorporates information on natural increase (births, deaths) and net migration (net domestic migration, net international migration) that has occurred in an area since the latest decennial census (Census Bureau 2019). Because the state population varies based on births, deaths, and migration, it fluctuates a good bit each year. Therefore, the state population updates annually rather than updating every decade with a new census, creating more accuracy.

Lastly, the difference between Democrat and Republican female candidates is based on raw numbers from ballots of the analyzed years, which was found on the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) online database (Rutgers 2019). The difference based on the number of women in each party that ran for office each year then subtracted. Nevertheless, I subtracted Republican candidates from the Democrats, in order to see the effect of partisans and if one party had more candidates and/or winners. Each of the independent variables were important to this study to test their relevance to women's underrepresentation.

### Methodology

To find the difference between Democrat and Republican female candidates, I subtracted the Republican candidates from the Democrats. As for the state population, the numbers are based on the census bureau's specified publications. I was also able to find the percent of women who won; however, the percentage had to be calculated (the division of the number of women who won by the number of seats of each state, then multiplied by 100). I was able to locate both the percent of female winners and the number of women who ran for office on the CAWP website (Rutgers University 2019). I

went through each state and collected the number of women who won and the number of women who ran for office.

As for the female voter turnout rate, I used data that was already collected by Professor Michael P. McDonald at the University of Florida through the online database of elect project. Finally, for the percent of religious adherents I used Professor Mark Brockway's collected data; the percentage of the state's population that qualified as religious (those that identified as having a Christian or non-Christian faith) using the U.S. religion census from 2000 and 2010. Since the data goes from 2000-2018, he used the 2000 estimate for 2000-2008 and the 2010 estimate for 2010-2018, which could have some flaws. Another strategy to finding religious adherents would be to use the 2000 and 2010 numbers to determine how much adherence changes per year and then just add that to the estimates in a stepwise manner. Second, from looking at the measures most states are pretty stable over time and changing the estimates would artificially inflate the variation on some states over others. For the question asked, I think the strategy Professor Brockway used is best.

To start the process of regressions, I had to first separate the dependent variables with the correct independent variables. For the percent of women that won, I divided the number of women who won by the number of women who ran. In order to use this DV, I used the following IVs in the linear regression: the difference between the Democrat candidate and the GOP candidate, female voter turnout, percentage of each state population that claimed to be religious, and marriage, poverty and fertility rates. As for the second DV, the number of women that ran for office, I used the same IVs but added each state's population. Adding the state population was used to show the balance in the

women running beside the whole state population, in order to see the statistics on the ratio between the two set of numbers. However, I excluded state population from the first DV because it would have overlapped with the percentage of women that won, creating a skewed interpretation.

CHAPTER V – RESULTS

Table 1 *Descriptive Statistics (N=430)*

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Variance</i>
<i>Diffdemminusgop</i>	-135	112	12.772	17.410	303.100
<i>Voter turnout (F)</i>	28.700	78.800	53.370	10.743	115.402
<i>Poverty</i>	3.800	24.200	12.324	3.247	10.544
<i>Fertility</i>	47.200	94.500	64.686	7.953	63.254
<i>Marriage rate</i>	4.000	72.200	8.377	6.663	44.397
<i>Percent Religious Adherents</i>	27.600	79.100	48.119	10.600	112.367
<i>Statepop</i>	480,893	39,560,000	6,285,538.8	7,194,909.2	5.177E+13
<i>Percent women won</i>	30.303	100	61.325	12.231	149.603
<i>Number of women running</i>	10	254	47.430	32.412	1050.548

Table 2 *Regression Coefficients of the Percent of Women who Won and Independent Variables*

	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Diffdemminusgop</i>	-.089	.036	-.127**	-2.502	.013**
<i>Voter turnout (F)</i>	-.100	.058	-.088**	-1.728	.085**
<i>Poverty</i>	.274	.192	.073*	1.429	.154*
<i>Fertility</i>	-.203	.082	-.132**	-2.475	.014**
<i>Marriage rate</i>	.120	.094	.065	1.275	.203
<i>Percent Religious Adherents</i>	.133	.059	.115**	2.249	.025**
<i>Adjusted r<sup>2</sup></i>	0.39				

\*Denotes significance at the p<.10 level; \*\* Denotes significance at the p<.05 level;

\*\*\*Denotes significance at the p<.000

Table 2 indicates that there is a 39% variance in the DV that is explained by the IVs. Although each independent variable was tested, marriage rate had no significance; marriage does not affect a woman winning or not winning. For every one additional Democrat relative to Republicans running, there is a drop in women winning of .089%. In short, Democrat females have a negative effect on women winning, presenting a decreased chance that a female Democrat candidate would win an election. This suggests that Republican candidates have the opposite effect on their chances of winning. My findings are in opposition of Scola's 2013 study, where it was found that women are



more likely to win their election due to having liberal political ideologies (341-342). According to Poggione's 2012 findings, comparing southern states (primarily Republican) and nonsouthern states (likely to be Democrat), southern states have had a higher success rate among their female candidates in both houses of Congress (182, 185-186). Women are valued in both conservative and liberal states, but they are less likely to win their election when identifying as a Democrat.

The female voter turnout indicated that not all women support female candidates. For every female vote, there is a .100 decreased chance that a woman will win her election. This finding indicates that men are more likely to support their female candidates than women. However, when identifying a voter's preference in elected officials, it typically goes beyond rather they are male or female. Dolan (2014) found that voters' preference in a specific gender is not a dominate factor, electorates are more concerned with political parties and belief systems (102-105). However, based on **table 3's** finding that more Democratic women run for office and **table 2's** result that Republican women have more success, it can be concluded that the issue is the shortage of Republican candidates and the lack of support for the Democratic contenders. In result, when women vote, they tend to vote for male representatives over their female contenders.

Fertility rates also decreased the chance of a woman winning political office by .203. Women with children are less likely to win their race, suggesting that voters are less likely to vote for women that are mothers or could become mothers. Although traditional stereotypes of women merely having a place within the home have begun to diminish, these findings coincide with those of Sweet-Cushman and Karpowitz, et al. (2016, 1-3;

2018, 928). Both argued that women still feel the pressures of needing to put their home lives first, causing female candidates to adhere to social cues and to hold back from full participation. This suggests that women withhold their full potential, deterring voters from electing them to office. Therefore, high fertility rates cause women to have an unlikely successful outcome in their political races.

On the other hand, poverty rates and religious adherents have positive effects on women winning office. For poverty, for every poverty percentage, there is a .274 increased chance that a woman will win office. These results suggest that the higher the poverty, the more likely a woman will win her election. However, based on the above findings, that Republican women are more likely to win, these results are contradictory to previous studies. In Hersh and Nall's study, they found that poor southern black Democrats have the highest economic vote. Their study also identifies that the Democratic party focuses on redistribution policies, indicating that they focus on the poor (2016, 299-301).

Finally, as for religious adherents, there is a one percent increase in religious adherence that leads to a .133% increase in women winning. This demonstrates that religious people advocate for female politicians and/or religious states (likely Republican) have more female candidates. The results suggest that the finding overlaps with the those from above (also in **table 2**) where Republican women having a better chance of winning. These results coincide with Campbell, et al., where it was found that Republican voters are more likely to elect a candidate if they identify with a religious group (2011, 55). Poggione's study also supports these findings, that about 43% of all women who have served in the House and 58% of them who served in the Senate of

southern states (likely Republican) have been successful whereas nonsouthern states (likely Democrat) are significantly lower at 18% House and 42% Senate (Poggione 2012, 182, 185-186). Therefore, women are more likely to become successful in a state that has a high religious/conservative background.

*Table 3 Regression Coefficients of the Number of Women who Ran for Office and Independent Variables*

	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Diffdemminusgop</i>	.928	.068	.499***	13.738	.000***
<i>Voter turnout (F)</i>	.106	.110	.035	.963	.336
<i>Poverty</i>	-2.226	.374	-.223***	-5.949	.000***
<i>Fertility</i>	-.983	.156	-.241***	-6.301	.000***
<i>Marriage Rate</i>	-.226	.180	-.046	-1.251	.212
<i>Percent Religious Adherents</i>	-.094	.112	-.031	-.834	.405
<i>State population</i>	3.755E-7	.000	.083**	2.330	.020**
<i>Adjusted r<sup>2</sup></i>	.505				

\*Denotes significance at the p<.10 level; \*\* Denotes significance at the p<.05 level; \*\*\*Denotes significance at the p<.000

Table 3 indicates that there is a 50.5% variance in the DV that is explained by the IVs. Although each independent variable was tested, female voter turnout, marriage rate, and religious adherents did not have any significant effects in determining if a woman would run for office or not. Nevertheless, the remaining IVs did have significance in determining rather women run for state house or not. When the difference in Democrats

to Republicans goes up by one, there is a .928 increase in the number of women running for office overall. These results are in agreeance with Poggione's 2012 theory where women's concentration is in the Democratic party (182, 185-186). The liberal ideals of women's issues have drawn more Democratic women to run for office. However, in **table 2**, it was found that more Republican women win although there are more female Democrats that run. Poggione's theory could explain why this is happening. Women have a better chance in office when identifying as a Democrat, but the high electoral advantages of the Republican party decreased their chance (2012, 185-186).

As for poverty, it has a negative effect on women running for office by 2.226 for each poverty percentage. It suggests that women within areas of poor economies are less likely to run for office. Based on the above results that Democratic women are more likely to run for office, my findings are in opposition of a previous study by Hersh and Nall. Their 2011 study showed that Democrats support policies for the poor, favoring redistribution policies (2011, 55). Nevertheless, my findings show that poverty deters women from running for office. Based on Dolan's 2014 study that economic policies have been stereotyped within the male domain, even though it does not affect their elector's vote, could deter women from running in a poor area (103).

For fertility rates, it also had a negative effect on female candidates. When fertility rates go up by one, there is a .983 decrease in the number of women running. These results indicate that women with children are less likely to run for office, suggesting that they put family matters before public, political ones. Thus, these results suggest that women put their family lives before their political ones, just as Sweet-Cushman theorized (2016, 1-3). It also coincides with Karpowitz's, et al. 2018 research,

that women make career decisions based on societal values of women being the sole caretakers within their families (928). Cognitive studies in Sweet-Cushman's theory suggest that family responsibilities prompt women to calculate risks in different ways than men. Women are willing to opt out of a political career rather than putting their family obligations aside. Dolan and Hansen and Karpowitz, et al. studies also indicate that women are more likely to put family obligations and responsibilities before those of public/political ones.

Poggione (2012), O'Brien and Rickne (2016), Schwindt-Bayer (2005), and Brooks and Hayes (2019) argue that gendered expectations shape women's willingness to pursue elected office. Aside from structural factors and high reelection rates (mainly men), most women do not pursue political careers. Women are more likely to choose family obligations over political ones. These results coincide with those of Sweet-Cushman (2016) where it is found that when women choose to have political careers before having families; they are assumed to have a nontraditional lifestyle compared to their male counterparts (2). Thus, female candidates feel societal pressures that their political involvement is limited by having children. Essentially, women's private obligations outweigh those of political ones, leaving fertility to have a negative effect on women running for office.

As for state population, the results show that for each person in a state, there is a 3.755 increased chance that a woman will run for office. This indicates that the larger the population, the more likely a woman will run for a state house seat. For example, Poggione points out that this is in southern states, showing that larger populated southern states like Texas and Florida have more women in office (2012, 182, 185-186). While in

other, smaller populated states like Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi did not have any female representatives in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. In larger states like Texas, there are less conservative and less accepting of traditional gender roles. This also coincides with the above finding that more Democratic women actually run for office.

The more people in a state, the more legislative representatives are needed; thus, there will be an increase in candidates. These results indicate that women are more comfortable and confident at being successful in their political race. Just as Karpowitz, et al. stated, these results have a positive impact because having additional women on the ballot increases the probability that a woman will become elected (2017, 939). Having a higher number of women on a ballot could be creating higher confidence for female candidates, encouraging them to run for office.

## CHAPTER VI – CONCLUSION

Underrepresentation of women in the United States is widely known, but previous studies did not analyze the issue based on the percentage of female winners and the number of women who ran. In this study, I generally used the framework of various studies by Dolan, Dolan and Hansen, Sweet-Cushman, and Karpowitz et al. for the primary understanding of women's underrepresentation in the US, although numerous theorists were noted. However, these studies did not conduct analyses on why women run and win to explain why they are still widely underrepresented. Therefore, I conducted two linear regressions to deepen the understanding of underrepresentation of women in American politics.

I found that women's percentage of winning in state legislative elections are negatively affected by the female Democrat candidates, female voters, and fertility rates, but positively affected by poverty rates and religious adherents. These findings coincide with those of Dolan (2014), Dolan and Hansen (2018), Poggione (2012), and Karpowitz et al. (2017). These scholars found that women and society are more likely to separate family duties from career paths. Their studies also support my finding that Republican women are more likely to be successful. Their findings also coincide with my results on why women run for office, where it was found that Democratic women are more likely to run for office, women are more likely to put family obligations first, and that high state populations have a positive effect on women running.

Because the evidence of winning and running are based on different factors, it was essential to provide both findings to fully understand the issues of underrepresentation. Evidence from both linear analyses present that women are

successful when separating their personal and public lives. These findings ultimately indicate that state legislative elections lack female candidates due to their personal choice of opting out of political careers (at least at some point), primarily putting their personal lives before political ones. Based on my findings, underrepresentation is not based on patriarchal stereotypes, women are just not interested in political careers.



APPENDIX A - Tables

Table 1 *Descriptive Statistics*

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Variance</i>
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<i>Poverty</i>	3.800	24.200	12.324	3.247	10.544
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	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
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<i>Adjusted r<sup>2</sup></i>	0.39				

Table 3 *Regression Coefficients of the Number of Women who Ran for Office and Independent Variables*

	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Diffdemminusgop</i>	.928	.068	.499***	13.738	.000**
<i>Voter turnout (F)</i>	.106	.110	.035	.963	.336
<i>Poverty</i>	-2.226	.374	-.223***	-5.949	.000***
<i>Fertility</i>	-.983	.156	-.241***	-6.301	.000***

Table 3 Continued

<i>Marriage rate</i>	-0.226	.180	-.046	-1.251	.212
<i>Percent Religious Adherents</i>	-.094	.112	-.031	-.834	.405
<i>State Population</i>	3.755E-7	.000	.083***	2.330	.020**
<i>Adjusted r<sup>2</sup></i>	.505				

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