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Women's Political Capabilities as Mediators of Leadership and People Satisfaction

By Nicos Antoniades¹, Iris Mohr², Anna Koukkides-Procopiou³

Abstract

Despite a much lower proportion than men, in both business and politics, a 2018 Pew Research Center survey shows that majorities in the U.S.A. say women leaders in comparison to men are more compassionate and empathetic in working out compromises and in standing up for their beliefs. Via the resource-based view tool, the researchers examine these specific capabilities (i.e., political proposals that benefit society, humanitarian causes, and political ideas) of U.S. women politicians and men politicians, while separately attempting to validate public perceptions of leadership. Using correlation analysis, the study tests the effect of each capability on leadership and people satisfaction. Data were collected from 80 U.S. politicians (40 women and 40 men) from State and Local Governments. The survey took place between 2 October and 5 December 2017. The results show that "women politicians' ability to build humanitarian political proposals" has a statistically significant strong positive impact on "leadership", while "women politicians' ability to build political proposals to benefit society" has a statistically significant strong positive impact on "people satisfaction". Putting the gender equality argument aside, the study suggests that women, in any case, deserve much more than a "one in four" political participation, even if only in the name of collective decision-making for the common good. Thus, it is important for more women voters to be actively involved and participate in politics and political decision-making in the context of democratic governments and elected politicians. Managerial implications and academic guidance are provided for future research.

Keywords: Women in politics, Resource-based view, Political capabilities, Leadership, People satisfaction

Introduction

In 2019, women make up 23.7% of U.S. Congress, 25% of the U.S. Senate, 28.6% of State Legislatures, and 21.8% of Local Governments. Globally, the United States ranks at 78 out of

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193 countries, as far as female parliamentary representation is concerned, according to Inter-Parliamentary Union data for that same year (December 2019, data rankings). ⁴ A similar 'glass ceiling' is visible not only in American politics but also in the business world; although the number of females in top decision-making positions in the United States has risen through the years, women are still severely underrepresented, and we are far from gender parity (Women in the Workplace, 2019 report, conducted jointly by McKinsey and LeanIn.org). Given this, it is not surprising that it took two and a half centuries of American democracy for a woman (and a woman of color nonetheless) to enter the White House in her own right (Kamala Harris' Vice-Presidency) and the very same number of years for a woman in the capital for the first time (Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg).

While attention to political issues has gained momentum within both the business and academic communities, political marketing is a rather new discipline in academia, despite politics being as old as humankind⁵. Nonetheless, most recently, political marketing literature examined the electoral process through a feminist perspective (Sanghvi, M., 2019) and raised the question: Why, when women make up half the population and have had the right to vote for so many years in the United States, do they still not seem to regularly make it to the finish line, even if presented with qualified candidates to vote for (e.g., Hilary Clinton)?

Importantly though, there are academic writings that suggest that women need to exceed expectations to stand a chance in politics (Bauer, 2020). According to research conducted by Huddy and Terkildsen, masculine instrumental traits increase a candidate's perceived competence on a broader range of issues than the feminine traits of warmth and expressiveness, thus, making women standing for office appear as weaker in the eyes of voters, unable to surpass gender perceptions and expectations regarding what is required of strong candidates for the job (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993). For women to win an electoral race, they clearly need to be the better candidate in comparison to their male counterparts; otherwise, their chances of winning are rather slim. While it is often said that once women decide to run, they win just as much as men do, this is by no means an accolade to gender parity, as qualifications-wise, one is not comparing like with like. When a man and a woman run against each other and are equally qualified, the woman is more likely to lose (Lawless & Pearson, 2008). Another interesting research finding by the Barbara Lee Family Foundation is that female candidates need to be liked before voters vote for them, unlike male candidates whose capacity to be voted for remains independent of their likability. Based on the same research, voters seem to like female candidates more when they come across as carriers of 'feminine' characteristics (e. g. compassion and empathy), in 'normal' settings rather than in traditional positions of (male) power. Another study by Soh (1993) shows that despite experiences of women in politics, male superiority also complicates the behavioral rules for gender relations. Women have a crucial role to play in politics and unlimited career opportunities that will increase the degree of their satisfaction (Nelson, Quick, Hitt, et al., 1990).

Thus, if gender⁶ is an issue in elections, and elections cannot escape the premise of political marketing, then political marketing needs to pay attention to gender through examining dynamics, power relations, as well as perceptions of gender characteristics. Thus, this research

⁴ Canada finds itself at no 54.

⁵ A top-notch political marketing guide to electioneering, dating back to ancient Rome, would be Cicero's Commentariolum Petitionis. It was brought to the forefront of modern political marketing by James Carville, after he had successfully helped Clinton win his first presidential race (see Carville, Foreign Affairs, June 2012).

⁶ Due to limited extensive research available on this topic, the definition of gender used in this paper refers to binary gender definitions, excluding transgender politicians.

attempts to tackle the examination of some of the skills and qualifications of female politicians, which could make them better equipped to handle particular issues vis-a-vis their male counterparts, as its working hypothesis.

Political marketing as a discipline requires building its own models to inform and influence political action (Antoniades, 2021; 2020; Antoniades & Mohr, 2020; 2019a; 2019b; Lock & Harris, 2011). One such model is the resource-based view (RBV): a managerial framework used to determine the strategic resources with the potential to deliver comparative advantage to a firm for achieving superior performance. Via the resource-based view tool, this research examines specific political capabilities (i.e., the ability to build political proposals to benefit society, the ability to build humanitarian political proposals, and the ability to stand behind a political idea) of U.S. women politicians and men politicians, separately. To reach this goal, this paper proceeds to offer a brief review of the conceptual background and the methodology behind this quantitative survey. It closes with an analysis and presentation of the results, conclusions and implications, and suggestions for future research.

Conceptual Background

The resource-based view model (RBV) is a basis for the competitive advantage of a firm and lies primarily in the application of a bundle of valuable tangible or intangible resources at the firm's disposal (Antoniades & Mohr, 2019; Leonidou, et. al, 2012; Penrose, 1959) and is important for advancing research. Voola and O'Cass (2010), O'Cass (2009), and Lynch, Baines, and Egan (2008) focused on political parties' performance. Antoniades (2019) and Antoniades and Haan (2018) dealt with elected politicians' competitive advantage and performance. More recently, Antoniades and Mohr (2019a; 2019b) and Antoniades and Haan (2019) expanded the theory of RBV in political marketing by examining government and politicians' capabilities as drivers of performance and voter (as a consumer) satisfaction. Despite the significant contributions of the aforementioned studies, both in theory and practice, RBV research has not examined whether women politicians deserve an equal representation at the highest level of the political hierarchy in the USA. This comes as a surprise when, according to the Center for American Women and Politics (2019), women in the U.S. Congress make up 23.7%, 25% in the U.S. Senate, 28.6% in State Legislatures, and 21.8% in Local Governments.

On the contrary, gender representation has been a more significant issue in other countries (New Parline, 2019). For example, in 1955, Ann Shipley became the first woman in Canadian history to introduce the formal motion to accept a Speech from the Throne (Globe and Mail, 1981). Thirty-eight years later, in the 1993 election, the Progressive Conservatives achieved gender parity in their elected caucus, but only by virtue of electing just two Members of Parliament nationwide and losing official party status (Toronto Star, 2015). More recently, the New Democratic Party's slate of candidates in the 2015 election was 42% female, with 145 women constituting the largest slate of female candidates ever nominated by a single political party in a federal election (Parliament of Canada, 2015). Despite this, Canadian political parties have often struggled to increase the number of women prepared to enter the Parliament. According to Cool (2019), this is mainly because women are reluctant to run for parliament because of the adversity and combative nature of the work. Adding to this difficulty, Canadian political parties are unable to put forward a slate of candidates that is more than 20% female, and parties that implement more active strategies often risk being criticized as "anti-democratic."

A similar situation exists in the U.S.A. not only when it comes to women winning, as already mentioned earlier in the paper, but also in deciding to run in general (The New York Times,

2016). Apparently, there is a strong interplay between gender and the current structure of power politics which acts as a barrier to entry for women. Research indicates that there is a gendered gap in political ambitions, which, independent of age and partisan affiliation and profession, appear to stem from specific causes, including work-life considerations, lower tolerance to the rigors of political campaigning, and a pronounced self-confidence gap of whether they, as women, can do the job (Lawless, J. & Fox, R., May 2008). Despite the lower proportion than men, in both business and politics, the Pew Research Center survey (2018) shows that most Americans say women are more compassionate and empathetic than men and that women are better at working out compromises and standing up for what they believe in.

Research Question

Inspired by the Pew Research Center survey (2018), the researchers aim to examine whether women leaders are better than men in being compassionate and empathetic, in working out compromises, and in standing up for their beliefs. This study aims to answer the question: Are women politicians more capable than men? If yes, what are these capabilities?

Research Aims

Using the resource-based view model (RBV), this study aims a) to examine specific capabilities that may lead to leadership and people (citizen) satisfaction, and b) to compare the dynamic of these capabilities between U.S. women and men politicians.

Model and Research Hypotheses

Antoniades and Haan's study (2019) serves as a foundation for these research questions; they define political performance as the degree of citizen satisfaction, citizen loyalty, and politicians' reputation. This study's conceptual model comprises six hypothesized associations between key constructs and "leadership" and six hypothesized associations between key constructs and "people satisfaction." The conceptual model is shown in Figure 1. The research hypotheses to be examined are shown in Table 1.

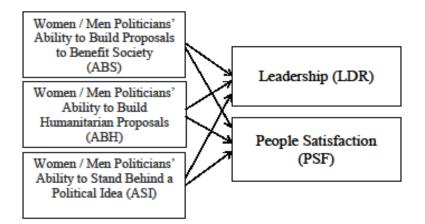


Figure 1: The Conceptual Model

| Variables | Scholars |
|---|---|
| (Political Marketing) | (Political Marketing) |
| Political Performance | Antoniades (2021) |
| Political Competitive Advantage | Antoniades (2020) |
| Citizen Satisfaction | Antoniades & Mohr (2020) |
| Citizen Loyalty | Antoniades & Mohr (2019a) |
| | Antoniades & Haan (2019) |
| | Antoniades (2019) |
| | Antoniades & Haan (2018) |
| | Voola & O'Cass (2010) |
| | O'Cass (2009) |
| Landarshin (LDD) | Lynch, Baines, & Egan (2008) |
| Leadership (LDR) 🖛 | Adapted from Antoniades & Haan (2019) |
| People Satisfaction (PSF) ← | Adapted from Antoniades & Mohr (2019b); |
| | Antoniades & Haan (2019) |
| Variables | Scholars |
| (Gap in Political Marketing) | (Gap in Political Marketing) |
| Ability to Build Political Proposals to | Adapted from Antoniades (2021) |
| Benefit Society 🖛 | |
| Hypotheses | |
| H1a: Women Politicians' Ability to Build | |
| Political Proposals to Benefit Society (ABS) | |
| is positively related to Leadership (LDR) H1b: Men Politicians' Ability to Build | |
| Political Proposals to Benefit Society (ABS) | |
| is positively related to Leadership (LDR) | |
| is positively related to Leadership (LDR) | |
| H4a: Women Politicians' Ability to Build | |
| Political Proposals to Benefit Society (ABS) | |
| is positively related to People Satisfaction | |
| (PSF) | |
| H4b: Men Politicians' Ability to Build | |
| Political Proposals to Benefit Society (ABS) | |
| is positively related to People Satisfaction | |
| (PSF) | |
| Ability to build humanitarian political | Adapted from Antoniades, N. (2021) |
| proposals | |
| Hypotheses | |

Table 1: Hypothesis Development

| H2a: Women Politicians' Ability to Build Humanitarian Political Proposals (ABH) is positively related to Leadership (LDR) H2b: Men Politicians' Ability to Build Humanitarian Political Proposals (ABH) is positively related to Leadership (LDR) | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| H5a: Women Politicians' Ability to Build Humanitarian Political Proposals (ABH) is positively related to People Satisfaction (PSF) | |
| H5b: Men Politicians' Ability to Build | |
| Humanitarian Political Proposals (ABH) is | |
| positively related to People Satisfaction | |
| (PSF) | |
| A bility to stand babind a political idea | Adapted from Antoniades (2010) |
| Ability to stand behind a political idea | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |
| Ability to stand behind a political idea | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |
| | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |
| Hypotheses | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |
| Hypotheses H3a: Women Politicians' Ability to Stand Behind a Political Idea (ASI) is positively related to Leadership (LDR) | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |
| Hypotheses H3a: Women Politicians' Ability to Stand Behind a Political Idea (ASI) is positively related to Leadership (LDR) H3b: Men Politicians' Ability to Stand | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |
| HypothesesH3a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H3b: Men Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positively | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |
| Hypotheses H3a: Women Politicians' Ability to Stand Behind a Political Idea (ASI) is positively related to Leadership (LDR) H3b: Men Politicians' Ability to Stand Behind a Political Idea (ASI) is positively related to Leadership (LDR) | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |
| HypothesesH3a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H3b: Men Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H6a: Women Politicians' Ability to Stand | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |
| HypothesesH3a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H3b: Men Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H6a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H6a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positively | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |
| HypothesesH3a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H3b: Men Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H6a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H6a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to People Satisfaction (PSF) | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |
| HypothesesH3a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H3b: Men Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H6a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H6a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to People Satisfaction (PSF)H6b: Men Politicians' Ability to Stand | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |
| HypothesesH3a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H3b: Men Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H6a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to Leadership (LDR)H6a: Women Politicians' Ability to StandBehind a Political Idea (ASI) is positivelyrelated to People Satisfaction (PSF) | Adapted from Antoniades (2019) |

Research Methodology

Given that the U.S.A. is a key player in the international political arena, and its influence is both cultural and political (Haynie, 2017), this quantitative study took place in the United States. A total of 142,913 U.S. elected politicians served as the population of this survey; this includes the National Conference of States Legislatures (2010) and the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1992). State Legislatures are 7,382 and Members of the Municipal Governments are 135,531. Forty female and forty male U.S. politicians were randomly selected for the sample and were emailed a personal email invitation (link) using politicians' contact information that is made available through State Government and City Council official websites. A questionnaire link was designed with Survey Monkey online software (2018). The researchers used a structured approach with closed statements based on a 7-point Likert rating scale (1932) ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) to capture the intensity of the politicians' feelings for a given item (i.e., the ability to build political proposals to benefit society). The questionnaire took place between 2 October 2017 and 24 November 2017.

The following statistics were used: (a) the mean; (b) the standard deviation; (c) Pearson

correlations (1895); and, statistical hypothesis testing (Wasserstein and Lazar 2016) at a 95% confidence level; p-value ≤ 0.05 indicates strong evidence against the null hypothesis. For such studies, the correlation coefficient is more difficult to measure (Shortell, 2001). Thus, correlations above 0.40 are considered relatively strong; correlations between 0.20 and 0.40 are moderate, and those below 0.20 are considered weak. Statistical results are presented in Table 2.

| Variable | Mean | Gender | Pearson Cor. (LDR) | p-value |
|---|-------|--------|-----------------------|---------|
| Ability to Build Political Proposals to Benefit Society (ABS) | 5.775 | Women | 0.58 | 0.48 |
| Ability to Build Political Proposals to Benefit Society (ABS) | 5.9 | Men | 0.15 | 0.111 |
| Ability to Build Humanitarian Political Proposals (ABH) | 5.35 | Women | 0.64 | 0.038 |
| Ability to Build Humanitarian Political Proposals (ABH) | 4.675 | Men | -0.1 | 0.431 |
| Ability to Stand Behind a Political Idea (ASI) | 6 | Women | 0.08 | 0.43 |
| Ability to Stand Behind a Political Idea (ASI) | 6.625 | Men | -0.17 | 0.168 |
| Leadership (LDR) | 4.75 | Women | | |
| Leadership (LDR) | 5 | Men | | |
| Variable | Mean | Gender | Pearson Cor. (PSF) | p-value |
| Ability to Build Political Proposals to Benefit Society (ABS) | 5.575 | Women | 0.53 | 0.009 |
| Ability to Build Political Proposals to Benefit Society (ABS) | 5.9 | Men | -0.08 | 0.591 |
| Ability to Build Humanitarian Political Proposals (ABH) | 5.35 | Women | 0.37 | 0.308 |

Table 2: Statistical Analysis

| Ability to Build | 4.675 | Men | -0.02 | 0.992 |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Humanitarian Political | | | | |
| Proposals (ABH) | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Ability to Stand Behind a | 6 | Women | 0.18 | 0.997 |
| Political Idea (ASI) | | | | |
| Ability to Stand Behind a | 6.625 | Men | 0.02 | 0.743 |
| Political Idea (ASI) | | | | |
| | | | | |
| People Satisfaction (PSF) | 5 | Women | | |
| | | | | |
| People Satisfaction (PSF) | 5.3 | Men | | |
| | | | | |

Presentation of Results

Respondents' Demographics

As indicated, the sample of the study consisted of forty female and forty male U.S. elected politicians. Ninety-five percent (95%) of female and 92% of male respondents went to college or university, meaning this distribution shows that most of the respondents were highly educated people who understand the importance of this study. Demographic information is presented in Appendix A.

Hypothesis Testing

Leadership

H1a: Women Politicians' Ability to Build Political Proposals to Benefit Society (ABS) is positively related to Leadership (LDR)

The correlation value (0.58) shows a strong positive relationship between ABS and LDR. The results are not significant with a p-value of 0.48.

H1b: Men Politicians' Ability to Build Political Proposals to Benefit Society (ABS) is positively related to Leadership (LDR)

The correlation value (0.15) shows a weak positive relationship between ABS and LDR. The results are not significant with a p-value of 0.111.

H2a: Women Politicians' Ability to Build Humanitarian Political Proposals (ABH) is positively related to Leadership (LDR)

The correlation value (0.64) shows a strong positive relationship between ABH and LDR. The results are significant with a p-value of 0.038.

H2b: Men Politicians' Ability to Build Humanitarian Political Proposals (ABH) is positively related to Leadership (LDR)

The correlation value (-0.1) shows a weak negative relationship between ABH and LDR. The results are not significant with a p-value of 0.431.

H3a: Women Politicians' Ability to Stand Behind a Political Idea (ASI) is positively related to Leadership (LDR)

The correlation value (0.08) shows a weak positive relationship between ASI and LDR. The results are not significant with a p-value of 0.43.

H3b: Men Politicians' Ability to Stand Behind a Political Idea (ASI) is positively related to Leadership (LDR)

The correlation value (-0.17) shows a weak negative relationship between ASI and LDR. The results are not significant with a p-value of 0.168.

People Satisfaction

H4a: Women Politicians' Ability to Build Political Proposals to Benefit Society (ABS) is positively related to People Satisfaction (PSF)

The correlation value (0.53) shows a strong positive relationship between ABS and PSF. The results are significant with a p-value of 0.009.

H4b: Men Politicians' Ability to Build Political Proposals to Benefit Society (ABS) is positively related to People Satisfaction (PSF)

The correlation value (-0.08) shows a weak negative relationship between ABS and PSF. The results are not significant with a p-value of 0.591.

H5a: Women Politicians' Ability to Build Humanitarian Political Proposals (ABH) is positively related to People Satisfaction (PSF)

The correlation value (0.37) shows a moderately high positive relationship between ABH and PSF. The results are not significant with a p-value of 0.308.

H5b: Men Politicians' Ability to Build Humanitarian Political Proposals (ABH) is positively related to People Satisfaction (PSF)

The correlation value (-0.02) shows a weak negative relationship between ABS and PSF. The results are not significant with a p-value of 0.992.

H6a: Women Politicians' Ability to Stand Behind a Political Idea (ASI) is positively related to People Satisfaction (PSF)

The correlation value (0.18) shows a weak positive relationship between ASI and PSF. The results are not significant with a p-value of 0.997.

H6b: Men Politicians' Ability to Stand Behind a Political Idea (ASI) is positively related to People Satisfaction (PSF)

The correlation value (0.02) shows a weak negative relationship between ASI and PSF. The results are not significant with a p-value of 0.743.

Conclusions and Implications

In contrast to U.S. male elected politicians, these preliminary results show that U.S. women politicians' ability to build humanitarian political proposals has a statistically significant strong positive impact on leadership, and U.S. women politicians' ability to build political proposals to benefit society has a statistically significant strong positive impact on people satisfaction. The study confirms the findings of the Pew Research Center survey (2018) in that "women are more compassionate and empathetic than men," as well as "women are better at working out

compromises and standing up for what they believe in."

This validation is consistent with research on emotional intelligence that shows women outperform men in almost all emotional intelligence indicators (see data from 55,000 professionals in 90 countries, as collected and analyzed by the Korn Ferry Hay Group, Forbes, May 11, 2016). These findings are also on par with other earlier research conducted on the general effectiveness and leadership style of female elected parliamentarians, which point to the same direction (see Volden, C., Wiseman, A., Wittmer, D. Aug 2010 for a good synopsis of such research; as well as Quorum data, published in the New York Times, Feb 2015, providing similar evidence for female performance in the US Senate). The National Democratic Institute, which conducted 35 years of research in 100 countries, also found that women, more than men, tend to work across party lines, are highly responsive to constituent concerns, and prioritize health, education, and other key development indicators.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that despite female politicians' intentions or inclination to institute legislative change, this is hardly possible to take place in the absence of a critical mass of like-minded legislators.⁷ This is where quotas, even as a temporary measure, can step in to create the necessary critical mass in legislatures which can then trickle-down social change (Tripp & Kang, 2007). While 3% of countries used quotas in 1990, this percentage increased to 40% by 2015 (Hughes et al, 2017).

Nonetheless, given the difficulty of pushing through with such radical reform, other paths, for example, could be created to facilitate the entry of women into politics, such as infrastructure put in place to enhance work-life integration, increased access to campaign financing for female candidates, and training programs on how to run a campaign and interact with journalists. This is imperative since the Global State of Democracy Indices of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance trace a pronounced correlation between increased female presence in legislatures and an increase in legislation addressing the elimination of violence against women, childcare, and universal healthcare. This increased attention to gender equality could have also brought about commitment by governments towards the SDGs to the same effect.

Additionally, diversity in decision-making bodies is important in determining decision outcomes of higher quality. In the absence of diversity, in which members of varying perspectives and experiences could possibly act as devil's advocate to the established orthodoxy of a homogeneous group, a team can more easily experience 'groupthink' and thus, arrive at detrimental outcomes (riskier and less rational) when reaching decisions under pressure (Janis, 1982).

Even putting the above argument aside, in favor of efficiency, diversity, and inclusion, in terms of democratic representation, women deserve much more than a "one in four" political participation. According to 2019 data, women make up 51% of the US population and yet are represented in Congress by half that percentage. In comparison, white men make up 30% of the population and hold 62% of elected seats at local, state, and federal levels. People of color comprise 40% of the US population and yet hold 11% of elected seats (see June 2019 research conducted by the Reflective Democracy Campaign on the Eligibility Myth, accompanied by detailed statistical information on the wholeads.us page). Increased women's participation (especially if the emphasis is also placed on encouraging women from minorities to run) and active engagement in politics translates into tangible gains for representative democracy, as well as

⁷ Despite its limitations or even possibly the misconceptions arising from such thesis, one propagated mainly in the '70s and the '80s by Rosabeth Moss Kanter and Drude Dahlerup respectively, this continues to be both seminal and useful in explaining the dynamics of gendered teams.

enhancement of legitimization for the electoral political process. This is due to the perceived responsiveness of institutions to the population's needs and perspectives.

Although women may still be reluctant to run for parliament (Cool, 2019), U.S. political parties need to implement more active and encouraging strategies to involve them, as the findings of the current study support that the problem for women is not just winning, it's also deciding to run (The New York Times, 2016). It is important to keep in mind that political parties are the 'gatekeepers'⁸ to politics, and without their strong commitment to addressing conscious and unconscious gender bias, in public and private life, through the dedication of resources (money, media, and networks) to build capacity for a pipeline of women candidates, increased female participation in politics will not be easily facilitated. Although male superiority complicates the behavioral rules for gender relations, experiences of women in politics could be a great facilitator towards political equality (Soh, 1993). In today's era, women need to realize their crucial role in politics and take advantage of unlimited career opportunities that will increase the degree of their satisfaction (Nelson, Quick, Hitt, et al., 1990).

Recommendations for Future Research

Though the sample of this study is small, and the definition of gender is restricted to the binary concepts of men/women, future research could build on this framework. Specifically, more political capabilities could be identified and tested among a bigger number of U.S. (female and male) elected politicians. Further research could also validate the findings of this study using data obtained from Europe, Asia, Africa, and/or other countries. Further, the RBV tool can adopt a resource-based view of goal setting by identifying a political party's and/or a politician's, and/or a government's valuable resources and capabilities, the identification of more resources (i.e., technological), and dynamic capabilities (i.e., innovative, adaptive, etc.) as drivers of a political marketing strategy which leads to political competitive advantage and political performance. Additionally, future research could examine the impact of resources and capabilities on other political outcomes (i.e., credibility, reputation, loyalty, etc.). These would facilitate both men and women politicians to enhance their ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments and would dramatically upgrade the political marketing literature and practice.

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Conflicts of Interest/Competing Interests

All authors have seen and approved the manuscript being submitted. We warrant that the article is the authors' original work. We warrant that the article has not received prior publication and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

⁸ Pertinent term used by the OSCE Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties, July 2014

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Appendix A

Demographic Profile

| Group | Women | Men |
|--------------------|-------|-----|
| | % | % |
| Gender | 50 | 50 |
| Ages | | |
| 18-29 | 13 | - |
| 30-44 | 15 | 13 |
| 45-54 | 30 | 25 |
| 55-64 | 25 | 35 |
| 65+ | 17 | 27 |
| Education | | |
| High School | 5 | 8 |
| College/University | 95 | 92 |
| Political Position | | |
| State Gov't | 30 | 47 |
| Local Gov't | 70 | 53 |
| Party Affiliation | | |
| Democratic Party | 50 | 33 |
| Republican Party | 30 | 45 |
| Other Affiliations | 20 | 22 |