

WE CAN DO IT: ACHIEVING EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF
GENDER IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

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ABSTRACT

One hundred years after the ratification of the 19th Amendment, women remain significantly under-represented in the federal legislature, occupying only 19.6 percent of congressional seats in 2017. Holding fewer than half of the seats in Congress prevents American women from having a public voice relative to their presence in the population. This Thesis proposes that there are three societal and institutional barriers sustaining unequal representation of gender in Congress: (1) a gender gap in political ambition; (2) institutional culture; and (3) incumbency advantage. This research offers policymakers and the discipline practical approaches to promoting gender parity in the United States.

While gender scholars often attribute gender biases as leading explanations for inequality in Congress, a literature review in the first chapter discounts perceived discrimination by the media, political parties, and the electorate as unrealistic theories to explain sustained unequal representation of gender. In addition, an exploratory study on the gender gap concluded that women simply do not choose to run for office as often as men. This research also contributes a historical examination of female political influence in order to highlight this perceived identity as an explanation for the gender gap in political candidacies.

The second chapter expands on the study of traditional gender identities to include an analysis of lingering patriarchal dominance, which highlights its role in crafting a male dominated perspective of governance. Further, election data was arranged to study the relationship between state term limits and federal incumbency advantage. This research concluded that states with term limits are more likely to elect women to federal office, and that states with term limits are also closer to reaching parity in Congress than states

without these constraints. This evidence suggests that state term limits reduce the impact of incumbency advantage by propelling female leaders with previously established name recognition and fundraising avenues into federal elections.

The final chapter investigates global best practices to promoting gender equality and assesses their value to U.S. policymakers. This analysis recommends that policymakers consider public awareness campaigns and political training programs as methods to diminishing the barriers sustaining unequal representation. Finally, this exploratory study also concluded that women in Congress and non-profit organizations are the most appropriate formal networks to encourage political ambition in American women.

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“I had a life partner who thought my work was as important as his, and I think that made all the difference for me.” -Ruth Bader Ginsburg

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THESIS INTRODUCTION

*“We’re half the people, we should be half of the Congress,”*¹ said Jeannette Rankin after being elected as the first female representative to the U.S. Congress in 1916, three years before the ratification of the 19th Amendment. One hundred years later, women remain significantly under-represented in the federal legislature, occupying only 19.6 percent of congressional seats in 2017. Holding fewer than half of the seats in Congress prevents American women from having a public voice relative to their presence in the population.

The fight for female equality in Congress has often been muddled by politics, being dismissed as a feminist ideal. However, the issue of equal representation has been at the forefront of political debate since the drafting of the Constitution. New York’s delegate, Melancton Smith aligned the Anti-Federalists with strong democratic principles. He stated, “in order to exercise their powers discreetly for the happiness of the people [...] representatives [should] resemble those they represent; they should be a true picture of the people; possess the knowledge of their circumstances and their wants; sympathize in all their distresses, and be disposed to seek their true interests.”² Alexander Hamilton rebutted the Anti-Federalist’s political warning by claiming, “the idea of an actual representation of all classes of the people, by persons of each class, is altogether visionary. Unless it were expressly provided in the Constitution, that each [...]

1 "Jeannette Rankin Biography." Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives. History, Art and Archives of the United States House of Representatives. Web. <http://womenincongress.house.gov/member_profiles/profile.html?intID=202>.

2 Smith, Melancton. Representation. 1788. MS, New York.
<http://presspubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch13s37.html>

should send one or more members, the thing would never take place in practice.”³

Centuries of “practice” have proven the institution of Congress favors the interests of the demographics that embody its membership.

Therefore, inequality in Congress has real consequences for under-represented Americans, like women. In exploring the practical significance of congressional representation, Richard Fenno found that members of Congress take more interest and action on issues pertinent to their political base, which is often derived from constituents that share the member’s background. By shadowing nearly two-dozen representatives in their home districts, Fenno observed that members feel more comfortable among the groups in which they personally identify with. One House member interviewed by Fenno provided an example of this sentiment,

I was born on the flat plains, and I feel a lot better in the plains area than in the mountain country. I don’t know why it is. As much as I like [that constituent], I’m still not comfortable with him. I’m no cowboy. But when I’m out there on that flat land with those ranchers and wheat farmers, standing around trading insults and jibes and telling stories, I feel better. That’s the place where I click. [...] That’s my strong area. I won by a big margin and offset my losses. If I win next time, that’s where I’ll win it-on the plains.⁴

³ Hamilton, Alexander. Representation, *The Federalist Papers*, 1788.

⁴ Richard F. Fenno, Jr., “U.S. House Members in their Constituencies: An Exploration” *American Political Science Review* 71: 3 (Sept., 1977): 888.

While it is not surprising that members perform better with groups that share common interests, Fenno argued that a representative's concern for the stability of their political base directly influences their behaviors in Washington and their decisions on resource allocation. Therefore, the interests of women are at a significant disadvantage within an 80 percent male dominated Congress.

Some scholars argue otherwise. Thomas Hobbes believed the role of representation was similar to that of a performer or actor. He believed successful representation depended merely on authorization and obligations, rather than personal identity.⁵ This understanding of representation suggests that a member of Congress could be fired at the ballot box for poor performance, just as an actor on stage could, incentivizing the representative to perform his/her responsibilities as their constituencies demand. However, Hannah Pitkin's critique of Hobbes argues that he was led by a "misconception of what representation is like in the context of action," because representation means more than acting on behalf of constituents, "representing means conforming to an external standard: resembling an absent thing, embodying a principle [and] suggesting an idea."⁶ Of course, male representatives consider the concerns of their female constituents, and many of them have a solid understanding of what those interests are, but in reality, only women can *set* the political agenda for the gender.

⁵ Hanna Pitkin, "Hobbes's Concept of Representation - I" *American Political Science Review* 58: 2 (June 1964): 334.

⁶ *Ibid.*: 338.

This academic contribution does not intend to imply that male representatives cannot serve the interests of their female constituents sufficiently; rather, it argues that an increased presence of women in Congress would evolve the institution to be more reflective of the modern American electorate and its needs. On Capitol Hill, women have proven gender parity would transform the institution, where female representatives offer alternative perspectives in policy deliberation and advocate for issues that have long been excluded from the political domain of American culture. According to the Congressional Women's Caucus, female representatives champion women's issues, both domestically and abroad, and secure American women legal protections against hate crimes, private sector and health care discrimination, and domestic violence.⁷ For example, in 2014, Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland and Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut introduced the Paycheck Fairness Act in their respective chambers. This bill required lawmakers to address whether or not to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, legally obligating employers to pay women equal wages to those of their male counterparts. More importantly, in their quest to eliminate an employer's ability to differentiate compensation based on gender, they successfully brought an issue that had long been downplayed into the forefront of the national conversation. In the Senate, the

⁷"Caucus Accomplishments." *Women's Congressional Policy Institute*, <http://www.womenspolicy.org/our-work/the-womens-caucus/caucus-accomplishments/>.

legislation ultimately saw 56 co-sponsors, and in the House, 208 members supported revisions to the 77-year old law.⁸

Female perspectives, around the world, help change policies and cultural norms that affect all of society, not only women. For example, Stephanie Schriock, President of EMILY's List, argues that once more women were appointed to the Armed Services Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, the care for military families during and after troop deployment received substantially more attention.⁹ Further, in 2004, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) researched the economic costs associated with gender oppression, and found that domestic violence cases cost Canada \$1.6 billion every year.¹⁰ When Maria Fitzpatrick was elected as a female Member of the Legislative Assembly in 2015, she brought this national issue to the forefront of political debate by publically sharing her story of physical abuse from floor of Canada's parliament. In an effort to receive support for her bill that would allow victims of domestic violence to break housing leases without penalty, she stated, "I will be horrified if anybody in this chamber votes against this bill."¹¹ Her powerful remarks challenged the status quo in Canada and brought legislative reform to a costly and victimizing issue that affected men and women alike.

⁸"Cosponsors S.84- Paycheck Fairness Act," (Congress.gov. United States Senate, 1 Jan. 2013.)
<<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/84/cosponsors>>.

⁹ Schriock, Stephanie. "Opinion: Women in Congress: More Is More." Politico 27 Aug. 2012. Web. 15 Jan 2015
<<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0812/80176.html>>.

¹⁰ "Role of Men and Boys in Promoting Gender Equality- Advocacy Brief," (Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All, UNESCO Bangkok, 2004):8.

¹¹ Paling, Emma. "Domestic Violence Laws Change Across Canada Following Horrific Year." (HuffPost Canada. December 18, 2016. Accessed October 04, 2017). http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/12/18/a-most-violent-year-changes-for-domestic-abuse-victims-follow-killings_n_8836194.html.

THESIS SCOPE

The study of gender inequality in the United States Congress is a complex political phenomenon that is often burdened by emotion. It is difficult to separate the undeniable evidence of gender bias and prolonged exclusion of women in American public life from *sustained* unequal representation in modern U.S. political institutions. In any case of inequality, it's empirically easier to study the symptoms of political injustice through the lens of the victims, rather than identifying and treating the root causes sustaining that injustice. While this introduction intends to assist the reader in conceptualizing this complexity, the proceeding chapters investigate specific aspects of unequal representation from a variety of perspectives; including, those directly impacted by inequality, academia, state and federal government institutions, and the international community.

The first chapter of this Thesis investigates evidence of societal barriers to gender parity, such as perceived sexism and traditional gender identities. However, the second chapter intends to remove the underlying emotion often associated with inequality in order to highlight the institutional barriers sustaining unequal representation of gender in the modern Congress. The final chapter of this Thesis aims to pragmatically investigate global best practices to promoting gender equality in government. The entirety of this academic contribution intends to offer policymakers and the discipline practical approaches to promote, and ultimately achieve, gender parity in the United States Congress.

CHAPTER 1: SOCIETAL BARRIERS CONTRIBUTING TO GENDER INEQUALITY

CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

“Foremost, we need a paradigm shift in cultural attitudes towards gender stereotypes. Everyone—both men and women —need to step outside of their comfort zone and analyze how these misconceptions are clouding our judgment on a subconscious level. Our strategic mindset should not be thwarted by having these misconceptions seep into our every-day interactions, create artificial divisions between the genders, or prescribe a path rooted in tradition over reason.”¹² The majority of scholars agree in some form or another that traditional gender roles ingrained in American society contribute to gender inequality in the United States Congress. This Chapter investigates the societal barriers obstructing progress toward parity, as they relate to lingering traditional gender identities.

Through a literature review of academic contributions, this Chapter intends to eliminate perceived discrimination by the media, political parties, the electorate, and financial donors as singular theories to explain unequal representation. This research also proposes that a gender gap in political candidacies is a societal barrier to gender parity in the modern Congress, and contributes an exploratory study on female political influence in order to highlight this gender identity as an explanation for why women do not choose to run for office as often as men.

¹² Alisa Melekhina, "Reality Check," October 08, 2017, <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/35710714-reality-check>.

THEORIES ON GENDER INEQUALITY

Because women were excluded from records of American public and political life, there is limited empirical research to explain the root causes of gender inequality within the twenty-first century Congress. Limited research directly investigates the role of gender in campaigning or legislating and even less exists to explain why men do more of both. Furthermore, the few theoretical theories that attempt to explain unequal representation of gender in the federal legislature either lack compelling evidence to justify sustained unequal representation of gender, or they examine the symptoms of this political phenomenon rather than the fundamental barriers that continue to delay parity in modern America.

Perceived Gender Discrimination by the Media

An argument widely accepted by American society as an explanation for gender inequality is that unfair treatment from the media discourages voters from electing women. A New York Times article published in the early twentieth century suggests that the press has been gender-biased for as long as women have been running for elected office. On November 11, 1916, Congresswoman-elect Jeanette Rankin was reported to have made “her own clothes and hats, and she [was] an excellent cook,” rather than discussing her legislative priorities.¹³ The media’s sexist attitude toward Senator Hillary Clinton and Governor Sarah Palin, during their unsuccessful 2008 presidential campaigns, placed this theory front and center as an explanation for gender inequality in

¹³ Julie Dolan, Michelle Swers, and Melissa M. Deckman. *Women and Politics: Paths to Power and Political Influence*. (Boston: Longman, 2011), 114.

the United States. National media outlets repeatedly referred to both candidates as “emotional” and “weak,” while political cartoons depicted the women as distraught mothers in search of the perfect outfit. While the national media undoubtedly has treated many female candidates unfairly throughout American history, academic evidence suggests this form of gender bias has little influence over public opinion or the American electorate’s decisions at the polls.

A variety of surveys and interviews prove American voters treat female candidates the same as their male counterparts at the ballot box, regardless of media coverage. In 2013, Danny Hayes, Jennifer Lawless, and Gail Baitinger conducted an experiment that exposed 961 potential voters to one of two fabricated newspaper articles, which varied only in the candidate’s gender. The sample was then asked to rate the candidate’s favorability on a scale from 0-10. The data concluded that, “negative appearance coverage can drive down candidate favorability rating, [but] the data also makes clear that a candidate’s sex has no bearing on voter’s evaluations.”¹⁴ Kathleen Dolan further debunks the theory that female candidates are burdened by their gender at the polls in her analysis of the 2010 congressional races. Dolan found “no evidence of

¹⁴ Dan Hayes, Jennifer Lawless, Gail Baitinger. “Who Cares What They Wear? Media, Gender, and the Influence of Candidate Appearance.” (Social Science Quarterly), 4-9.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/doi/10.1111/ssqu.12113/epdf>

any direct, consistent, or substantial impact for gender stereotypes on [voter's] evaluations of women candidates.”¹⁵

Further, social media allows female candidates to directly challenge mainstream media's gender bias reporting, further minimizing the media's influence over public opinion. Political candidates now have the ability to create personal connections with constituents and voters independently, online. In the past, political candidates relied on national news outlets to advertise their offices and campaigns. However, research by Jose Marichal suggests this former relationship is weaker in the era of social media, Marichal found that roughly 66 percent of all social media updates from Congressional members aim to strengthen a “personal connection” with constituents. He argues, “Facebook pages give members complete autonomy over their ‘presentation of self,’” allowing them to re-frame the narrative coming from national media outlets and ultimately reduce the impact of gender bias statements.¹⁶ For example, in February 2017, Senator Elizabeth Warren was silenced by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on the Senate Floor for reading a historic passage written by Loretta Scott King. The conservative-leaning media personality, Sean Hannity of FoxNews, labeled Senator Warren as an “obstructionist democrat [and] liar” and reported that she “had gone off the deep end.”¹⁷ In other words,

¹⁵ Kathleen Dolan. “Gender Stereotypes, Candidate Evaluations, and Voting for Women Candidates: What Really Matters?” (University of Wisconsin Milwaukee), 21.
<http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~jnd260/cab/CAB2013Dolan.pdf>

¹⁶ Scott A. Frisch et al., *Politics to the extreme: American political institutions in the twenty-first century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 125.

¹⁷ “Hannity Blasts ‘Fake Pocahontas’ Warren & ‘Obstructionist Democrats,’” (Fox News, February 08, 2017, , accessed October 04, 2017), <http://insider.foxnews.com/2017/02/08/hannity-monologue-elizabeth-warren-obstructionist-democrats>.

Hannity suggested that the female Senator was mentally unstable or crazy, which are comments that many women consider to be sexist. Senator Elizabeth Warren immediately responded to these attacks, via Facebook Live, in order to justify her actions and defend her rights as an elected member of Congress. As of September 2017, Senator Warren's social media response had 13 million views, was shared to 221,796 additional Facebook pages, and even coined a new feminist battle cry, "She Persisted."¹⁸ Senator Warren's experience highlights that the emergence of social media in the modern era greatly reduces the likelihood that gender bias reporting results in sustained unequal representation in the United States Congress.

Perceived Gender Discrimination by Political Parties

Another theory offered as an explanation for gender inequality in the United States Congress is that political parties recruit and support prospective male candidates more than females. For more than two centuries, men dominated the institution of government, thus the "lingering masculinized ethos [must continue to] favor the recruitment and selection of male candidates."¹⁹ Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox identify the barriers that remain from this patriarchal political system in their book, It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office. By surveying a sample of 900 men and 900 women that are roughly equal in their qualifications to hold public office,

¹⁸"U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren," During the debate on whether to make... – (U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, , accessed October 04, 2017,) https://www.facebook.com/senatorelizabethwarren/videos/vb.131559043673264/72433779439583/?type=2&theater-if_t=live_video_interaction-if_id=1486526408091711.

¹⁹ Lawless, Jennifer L., and Richard Logan Fox. It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office. Cambridge: (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 84.

they found that the women were formally asked to run by their “party elites” half as often as the men.²⁰ Julie Dolan, Melissa Deckname, and Michelle Swers go as far as describing political party behavior as discriminatory toward female candidates, as parties often “recruit [women] to serve as sacrificial lambs [...] and have a tendency to select candidates who look and behave like themselves”²¹

The argument that male control of political parties limits women from emerging as candidates is not convincing. Lawless and Fox’s data fails to account for the sample’s variance in gender among current party leaders. For instance, one survey response indicated a female resident of Maryland had never been recruited for public office. However, this scenario suggests that her female “party elite,” Senator Barbara Mikulski, also failed to recruit her. Furthermore, if potential first-time candidates are not being supported in their campaigns for state or local office as often as men, this is certainly not the case with federal elections and national political parties. Senator Claire McCaskill’s memoir shares the support she received from her future male colleagues, “I had never planned to run for the U.S. Senate, but just after the first of the year, I began getting calls from its key Democratic members: Harry Reid [and] Chuck Schumer.”²² Similarly, Senator Amy Klobuchar’s recruitment for the U.S. Senate came from Walter Mondale, “I realized that Mondale must have told me to put off an announcement about running for Attorney General because he [...] wanted me to considering running for Senate

²⁰ Ibid., 87.

²¹ Julie Dolan, Michelle Swers, and Melissa M. Deckman, “ 153.

²² McCaskill, Claire, and Terry Ganey. *Plenty Ladylike*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015: 113.

[instead].”²³ Senators McCaskill and Klobuchar’s congressional recruitment experiences in 2005 speak to the overall change in party behavior and their treatment of female candidates in recent decades.

Perceived Gender Discrimination by the Electorate and Political Donors

Sentiment toward female candidates has also been changing within the American electorate. In fact, political polling, vote percentages, and fundraising receipts prove the twenty-first century electorate support female and male candidates equally. A 2012 poll by Political Parity confirmed that 74 percent of voters believe the election of more women will improve the way Congress functions and would represent a positive step for the country.²⁴ A survey by the Pew Charitable Trust also found that 69 percent of Americans believe men and women make equally good leaders.²⁵ Additionally, Lawless and Fox analyzed a collection of National Opinion Research Council surveys, conducted between 1972-2000, and found that the percentage of Americans who believed men were better emotionally suited for politics has reduced by half since 1975.²⁶

Barbara Burrell’s analysis of Federal Election Commission contribution reports proves that women have also been competing equally with their male counterparts in all

²³ Klobuchar, Amy. *The Senator Next Door: A Memoir from the Heartland*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2015: 184.

²⁴ Hunt, Swannee. "Opinion: More Women Are Needed in Congress." (Boston Globe) 19 May 2012. Web. 15 Jan. 2015. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2012/05/18/more-women-are-needed-congress/usloW9NLDEu0tr6nQUgQLP/story.html>

²⁵ "Men or Women: Who's the Better Leader?" Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project. August 24, 2008. Accessed October 04, 2017. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2008/08/25/men-or-women-whos-the-better-leader/>.

²⁶ Lawless, Jennifer L., and Richard Logan Fox. *It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office*. Cambridge: (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 22.

elements of political fundraising.²⁷ Since her initial report on financial parity in 1992, political PACS supporting women, like EMILY's List, Women Lead Pac, and Women's Campaign Fund, have only strengthened female candidate's ability to raise early money, further diminishing their struggle to compete financially in the political arena.

THE GENDER GAP

Through the analysis of these theories, discrimination by the media, political parties, electorate, and political donors can be eliminated as singular explanations for sustained unequal representation of gender in the United States Congress. Despite this equality, the 2014 congressional races yielded little progress toward parity. Simply stated, too few women were on the ballot. Even in the event that every female candidate in 2014 was successful, female membership would only have amounted to a mere 26 percent in the Senate and 22 percent in the House of Representatives.²⁸ Women remain under-represented in the United States Congress because they do not choose to seek office as often as their male counter-parts.

Gender Gap in Political Ambition

The majority of gender scholars agree that a lingering "traditional female identity" ingrained in American society is the basis for this gender gap in political ambition, because American culture supports male authority and discourages female

²⁷ Burrell, Barbara C. *Gender in Campaigns for the U.S. House of Representatives*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2015: 118.

²⁸ Jessica Kuron, "We Can Do It: Achieving Equal Representation of Gender in the United States Congress," (Thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 2017)

leadership. Jennifer Lawless of American University describes the sentiment shared throughout the discipline, “the presence of traditional gender role expectations [...] creates and sustains [...] a deeply embedded imprint that propels men into politics, but relegates women to the electoral arenas periphery.”²⁹ In fact, lingering gender roles are the foundation for nearly all scholarly attempts to explain unequal representation in U.S government institutions.

Evidence from a variety of humanities and social science disciplines further support this understanding of the traditional female identity by highlighting gender bias throughout American history. Physiologist Bruno Bettelheim researched fairy tales in order to highlight differences between societal categorization of masculinity and femininity, as early as childhood. He observed, “female adolescence are depicted through the telling of a very different story [than boys]. Snow White and Sleeping Beauty awake from their deep sleeps, not to conquer the world, but to marry the prince.”³⁰ Linguistic Robin Tolmach Lakoff also contributes to this collective conversation by researching the depth of gender bias’ roots in human communication, “in religion, mythology, and literature, women are sexual predators and destroyers, evil temptresses always bringing good men down (think of Eve, Delilah, and Salome- just for starters.)”³¹ Similarly, historian Sarah Evans devoted an entire book to uncovering the hidden suppression of female leadership within recorded American history. She argues, “the virtual invisibility

29 Lawless, Jennifer L., and Richard Logan Fox, “It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don’t Run for Office,” (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13.

30 Bettelheim, Bruno. “The uses of enchantment: the meaning and importance of fairy tales,”(1977).

31 Robin Tolmach Lakoff, “The Language War,” (Berkeley, California: University of California Pr., 2002.)

of women to historians was no oversight. When history is conceived as a narrative to public action, its arena is a stage from which women have traditionally been excluded. The ideological power of that exclusion in turn fostered a double standard; women were ignored regardless of their political importance.”³²

Gender Gap in Political Role Models

Scholars also agree that this gender bias behavior and perceived gender identity has resulted in fewer positive role models to encourage future female political participation. In a March 2014 interview, Stephanie Schriock illustrated the influence role models can have, by sharing a personal memory of an elected representative that spoke at her school in Montana when she was young, “This is a woman who grew up just thirty minutes away from me, and not only did she run for statewide office, she won. She opened my eyes to so many possibilities.”³³ The need for inspiration that Schriock describes is not limited to only her.

Without positive examples of women in leadership roles at an early age, women assess themselves later in life to be less qualified to govern than their male counterparts. The report Men Rule found that women are twice as likely as men to assess themselves as unqualified to hold political office.³⁴ This research sought out a sample of both men and women equally positioned in their communities to be successful political candidates. The

32 Sara M. Evans, “Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America,” (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1997),1.

33 “Emily’s List President On Women, Politics & Confidence,” 2012, Women Working, <[http://www.womenworking.com/emilys-list-president-women-politics confidence](http://www.womenworking.com/emilys-list-president-women-politics-confidence)>.

34 Lawless, Jennifer L., and Richard Logan Fox. “It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don’t Run for Office,” 44.

participants were roughly equal in age, race, level of education, and household income. The study found that men surveyed were 60 percent more likely than women to assess themselves as “very qualified” to run for office. Simultaneously, women were twice as likely as men to believe it was “very unlikely” that they could win their first race.³⁵ In other words, a lack of positive female roles models results in many women believing they cannot seek public office in the first place.

PRIVATE VS. PUBLIC INFLUENCE

Frankly, qualified women do not run for political office as often as men, because they perceive they can have more influence over public life by not running. Despite struggling to equally position themselves in public life since the United States declared political participation a birthright, American women are not strangers to the power of influence. For centuries, women defended their political priorities through non-conventional methods of organized gossip, boycotts, and grassroots campaigns. Among many other political accomplishments, women collectively boycotted British tea in 1773, created national academic networks in order claim their right to an education, organized petition campaigns to give birth to the temperance and abolition movements of the 1830’s, and secured a constitutional amendment granting them the right to vote.³⁶ American women have witnessed political success without formal representation because they are experts at exercising public influence through non-formal means of political

35 Lawless, Jennifer L., and Richard Logan Fox. “Men Rule: The Continued Under-Representation in U.S. Politics.” (American University, Washington D.C., 2012)

36 Sara Margaret Evans, *Born for liberty: a history of women in America* (New York: Free Press Paperback, Simon & Schuster, 1997).

participation. In modern America, women continue to embrace this traditional female identity by bolstering their influence as leaders in the private sector, as advocates, and through social status, rather than abandoning these roles to pursue political office.

Influence in the Private Sector

Sam's Club CEO, Rosalind Brewer, highlights the public influence leaders in the business sector have on American life during a national CNN interview with Poppy Harlow, "we are the closest representation for our associates [and we] should set the policy."³⁷ Susan Wojcicki, CEO of YouTube, put Brewer's comments into practice, when she announced her company's paid family leave policy in a Wall Street Journal opinion piece.³⁸ Furthermore, the American Bar Association reported that women received almost half of all new law degrees in 2015.³⁹ The power of female attorney influence is most notably highlighted by Sarah Weddington's representation of Norma McCorvey during the U.S. Supreme Court Trial of Roe vs. Wade, securing women the right to choose to have abortion in 1973. From corporate boards and courtrooms, modern American women continue to achieve political influence through private avenues.

37Sara Ashley O'Brien, "Sam's Club CEO Rosalind Brewer takes heat for saying she prioritizes diversity," December 2015, CNNMoney, <http://money.cnn.com/2015/12/16/news/companies/rosalind-brewer-samsclubdiversity/index.html>.

38 Susan Wojcicki. "Paid Maternity Leave is Good for Business," December 2016, Wall Street Journal <http://www.wsj.com/articles/susan-wojcicki-paid-maternity-leave-is-good-forbusiness1418773756>

39 "A Current Glance at Women in Law." American Bar Association, April 2016. http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/marketing/women/current_glance_statistic_apl2016.autcheckda.pdf.

Female Influence as Advocates

Similarly, women working as political advocates continue to succeed at controlling public action through organized campaigns in private life. Over the last two decades, spouse related domestic violence cases have decreased by 64 percent in the United States.⁴⁰ While this significant reduction in violence against women is most notably attributed to the success of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, grassroots organizations had long been working to influence the public, law enforcement, and the federal government to take action on the issue.⁴¹ Prior to the Violence Against Women Act, the Battered Women's Movement demanded legal rights to divorce on the grounds of violence by their husbands; opened thousands of shelters and safe-havens for abused women; organized community task forces and commissions to educate the public; advocated for federal legislation acknowledging domestic violence as a crime; and obtained a Presidential Proclamation dedicating the month of October as national domestic violence awareness month.⁴²

Female Influence through Social Status

Modern women also continue to use their reputations to spark public action on their interests, by bringing conversations to the forefront of political dialog. Lena Dunham, actress and producer, used her popularity to ignite public opposition against the

40Shannan M. Catalano, "Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2010," U.S.A. Justice Department. Bureau of Justice Statistics, <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=4536>

41 Lisa Sacco, "The Violence Against Women Act: Overview, Legislation, and Federal Funding," *United States of America. Congressional Research Service*, (2015): 4.

42 "Timeline of the Battered Women's Movement," *State of New York. Human Resources Administration*, (2008), http://www.ncdsv.org/images/NYCHRADSS_TimelineBWM_2008.pdf

use of sexist or gendered lingo in the 2016 presidential race. In an April 2016 Time report, Lena Dunham advocated for a range of political issues in a statement of public support for Hillary Clinton,

I want Hillary Clinton to be President. I think she'd do a fantastic job, better than anyone else. Yes, I admit, I'm pretty worked up about the possibility of a woman President: it's something I thought was impossible, maybe even illegal, when I was a little girl. But one thing I'm not, as I'm routinely told, is ill-informed or ignorant — supporting Hillary only because of our shared anatomy [...] I'm with Hillary because of her commitment to women's reproductive health and rights [...] She's gone beyond any politician I've ever heard in laying out white people's responsibilities in ending racism [...] She fights for equal pay, [and] she raises money for other women running for elected office.⁴³

Additionally, the U.S. women's soccer team filed a wage-discrimination lawsuit against the National Soccer Federation in 2016, publically propelling “unequal pay for equal work” into the national spotlight.⁴⁴ As a result, their highly publicized collective

⁴³ "Lena Dunham: Why I Chose Hillary Clinton," (Time, April 2016) <http://time.com/4306966/lena-dunham-hillary-clinton-bernie-sanders/>.

⁴⁴ "U.S. Women's Team Files Wage-discrimination Action vs. U.S. Soccer," April 2016, ESPN News Services, <http://www.espn.com/espnw/sports/article/15102506/women-national-team-files-wage-discrimination-action-vs-us-soccer-federation>

bargaining negotiation concluded with these women receiving a significant increase in pay, expanded benefits, and rights to licensing and sponsorship deals.⁴⁵

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

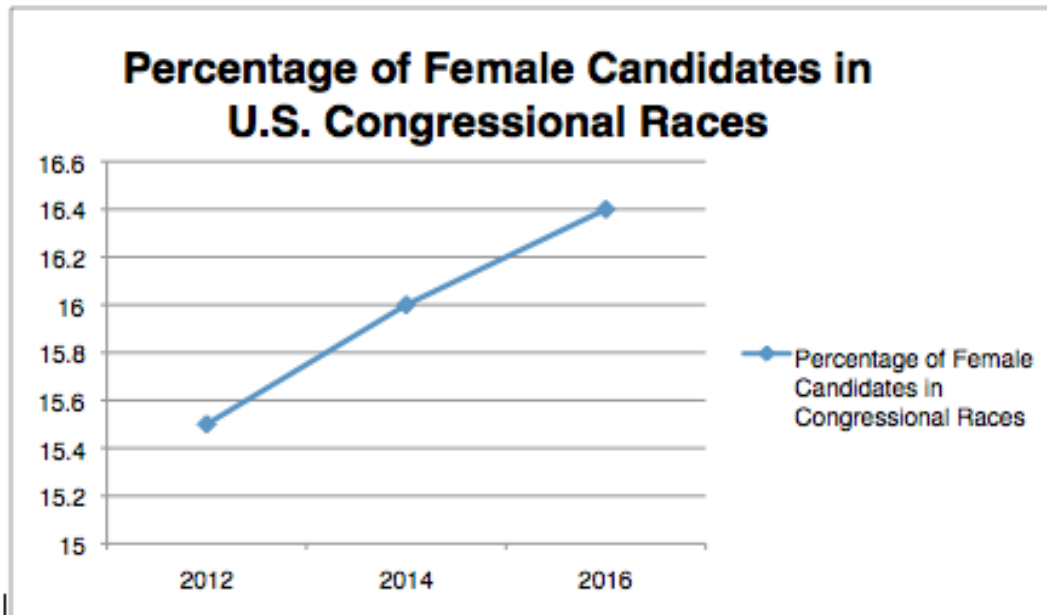
This Chapter defines private influence as a lingering female identity, highlights its relationship to the gender gap in political candidacies, and proposes that women and men can achieve parity in the United States Congress by eliminating this societal barrier. With female representation in Congress at a historical high, and a modern electorate that no longer discriminates against gender at the polls, it is clear that there has never been a better time in American history for women to redefine their societal roles and claim equal access to formal political avenues. Gender scholar, Jay Newton Small, believes that once the number of women in collective group reaches a critical mass of 20 to 30 percent, women begin to exert broad influence, because they support and empower one another.⁴⁶ Small's theory on "critical mass," suggests that women will progress toward parity when they have reached a critical mass as *candidates*, because women running for office become role models for other women and inspire confidence in future candidates. As more and more women run for public office, they will subsequently show other qualified women that they can hold similar jobs themselves. Evidence collected and analyzed from the 2012, 2014, and 2016 election cycles suggests this has already begun. The past three

⁴⁵ Edwin Rios, "The US women's soccer team scored a much-needed pay bump," (Mother Jones, June 23, 2017,) <http://www.motherjones.com/media/2017/04/equal-pay-day-us-womens-soccer-team-earns-pay-bump/>.

⁴⁶ Newton-Small, Jay. *Broad Influence: How Women Are Changing the Way America Works*. (New York: Time Books, 2016.)

election cycles have yielded more female candidates than the last, slowly increasing by a half of a percent each political cycle.⁴⁷

Figure 1.0



This increasing trend of female congressional candidates suggests that modern women are refocusing their traditional identity as private influencers and reestablishing their societal roles as leaders in public life, slowly progressing toward gender parity.

⁴⁷Jessica Kuron, "We Can Do It: Achieving Equal Representation of Gender in the United States Congress," (Thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 2017)

CHAPTER 2: INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS SUSTAINING GENDER INEQUALITY

CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

*“The organs of governance were designed by men, are operated by men, and continue to be controlled by men; even if they want to be more inclusive of women, they often do not know how.”*⁴⁸ The previous sections of this thesis investigated why modern women do not run for political office as often as men, and discredited most gender discrimination theories by arguing female candidates less frequently experience bias by the media, political parties, and the electorate than previous generations. Women simply do not run for political office as often as their male counterparts; subsequently, less women hold congressional office.

Theoretical contributions prevalent throughout the discipline often illustrate traditional gender roles as a burden on female candidates, rather than conceptualizing the possibility of institutional barriers also contributing to gender equality in the United States Congress. The increasing trend of women defying their role as private influences, and entering the public domain in modern America, suggests that additional explanations for sustained unequal representation must exist. This chapter intends to remove the underlying emotion that has plagued research on gender inequality in order to investigate barriers, beyond perceived gender biases, contributing to a delay in parity.

48 Lawless, Jennifer L., and Richard Logan Fox. *It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10.

Institutional Barrier 1: Institutional Culture

Only a collective commitment from both men and women will result in equal representation of gender in Congress, because the lingering identities associated with both genders have shaped the legacy of U.S. government institutions. While centuries of domesticity defined the traditional female role in society, patriarchal dominance has embodied the male identity and government institutions. Lingering patriarchal dominance in the United States Congress continues to challenge progress toward gender parity because male governance was engrained into the country's political institutions at its origin. When the Anti-Federalist and Federalist's excluded a mandate for the equal representation of all classes of people from the Constitution, they implicated the country's electoral processes and systems, and ultimately, limited the institution's ability to evolve with American culture.

Most notably, the exclusion of women from public political participation during the first century of American society resulted in government institutions and political networks being crafted and maintained by a one-sided perspective of governance. A collaborative psychology study aimed at identifying sex differences in adolescent games suggests that society prepares American children with different styles of leadership during childhood. Janet Lever observed in 1976 that boys engage in play longer and with larger groups, enjoying games like kickball or tag that teach them to "play with their enemies and compete with their friends- all in accordance with the rules of the game." On the other hand, girls participate in "turn-taking games," like hop-scotch and jump rope,

avoiding disputes that could damage their relationships.⁴⁹ Having been created and managed by only men, the United States government now fosters a competitive environment with an elaborate system of rules, rather than evolving into an institution also dependent on maintaining healthy relationships. As a result, the U.S. Congress lacks a healthy mix of the leadership skills adopted long ago by the modern American workforce, causing the institution to lag behind modern cultural precedent.

Corporate America has proven female leadership skills produce different results from men. The management consulting firm, McKinsey, studied the differences between male and female bosses. They found that women scored higher in “people development, expectation and rewards role models, inspiration and participative decision making [while men] were more inclined to use two behaviors: control and corrective action”⁵⁰ These complimenting styles of leadership result in groups represented by both genders outperforming their competitors. They also found that “companies with top-quartile representation of women in executive committees saw on average of 47 percent better returns on equity and 55 percent better average earnings.”⁵¹ The researching firm, Catalyst, similarly found that “companies with the highest percentages of female directors outperformed companies that had the lowest by 26 percent between 2004-

⁴⁹ Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982): 11.

⁵⁰ Newton-Small: 103.

⁵¹ Ibid.

2008.”⁵² Corporate America has begun to recognize these benefits and many companies are even investing in female leadership.⁵³

Recommendation 1: Transform the Institution

With a steady approval rating around only 20 percent, the members of Congress would benefit from taking Corporate America’s lead and attempt to transform the institution to be more inclusive of female leadership skills. The following chapter in this Thesis will highlight specific international efforts that promote gender parity in government, which may assist policymakers in conceptualizing ways to attract qualified women to run for federal office. Some of these global best practices include: mandating election quotas; formalizing commitments from political leadership to support parity; and strengthening non-profit support networks to recruit and train qualified women to run for office. These types of efforts promote the election of more women, thus transforming the institution by bringing female leadership skills directly to Congress. However, there also needs to be a change in institutional culture, so that more women aspire to hold these jobs to begin with.

Considering the culture of the institution is a reflection of its members, leaders in Congress need to foster an environment more appealing to qualified women. Female leaders in Washington already do this by challenging the narrative surrounding work/life balance. When asked how she raises children and serves in Congress, Congresswoman

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

Rodgers stated, “One of the keys is that this job does have some flexibility. People may not look at it immediately and think, ‘oh, there’s flexibility being a member of the Congress,’ on any given week there are demands obviously, but having that flexibility makes all the difference for me.”⁵⁴ Former EPA Administrator Carol Browner shared a similar story with Jane Newton-Small, “I remember saying, ‘Does anyone have a kid to pick up at day care? And you can see all these men sitting there thinking, ‘I am not gonna put my hand up,’ right? And then one said, ‘I do.’ And then others were also, “so do I.” We broke this taboo.”⁵⁵ Statements like these encourage government to be more reflective of modern America, resulting in an evolution of institutional culture. For example, during his acceptance of the House Speakership, Congressman Paul Ryan famously said, “I cannot and will not give up my family time.”⁵⁶ The Speaker’s remarks highlight one way current members of Congress can transform the institution to be more appealing to qualified women.

Congressional leaders can also transform institutional culture by embracing female leadership styles throughout its processes and procedures. Female representatives in the modern Congress bring an alternative style of governance to the institution, as they unite across party lines to negotiate, compromise, and reinvigorate the membership in times of despair. During the government shutdown in October 2013, female members of the Senate addressed their colleagues as a unified voice and advocated for bi-partisan

⁵⁴ Newton-Small, 102.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Rosen, Rebecca. "Paul Ryan Wants to Protect His Family Time," *The Atlantic*, October 21, 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/10/paul-ryan-familytime/411817/>.

collaboration. Their efforts resulted in the public pressure and institutional momentum necessary to reach a compromise. When asked to react to his female colleagues' leadership in the Senate, U.S. Senator John McCain stated, "I am very proud that these women are stepping forward [...] imagine what they could do if there were 50 of them."⁵⁷ While congressional leaders, like Senator McCain, often acknowledge the benefits associated with diversifying governance styles, the institution continues to operate using the male-preferred methods of leadership outlined by McKinsey and Catalyst, like control and corrective action. As recently as the 2017 congressional proposal to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the majority party firmly controlled the drafting of the legislation and blocked the minority from contributing amendments.⁵⁸ When asked why he would not support the bill, Senator John McCain responded, "I believe we could do better working together, Republicans and Democrats, and have not yet really tried."⁵⁹ Considering women in Congress have proven that negotiation and collaboration are effective female leadership skills that lead to bi-partisan compromise, the institution would benefit from improved processes that are more inclusive of this style of governance.

⁵⁷ Jay Newton-Small. "Women Are the Only Adults Left in Washington." (Time. October 16, 2013.) <http://swampland.time.com/2013/10/16/women-are-the-only-adults-left-in-washington/>.

⁵⁸ Park, Audrey Carlsen And Haeyoun. "Obamacare Included Republican Ideas, but the G.O.P. Health Plan Has Left Democrats Out." (The New York Times. July 21, 2017.) <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/07/21/us/health-care-amendments.html>.

⁵⁹ Thomas Kaplan And Robert Pear, "McCain Announces Opposition to Republican Health Bill, Likely Dooming It," (The New York Times, September 22, 2017,) <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/22/us/politics/mccain-graham-cassidy-health-care.html>.

Institutional Barrier 2: Incumbency Advantage

While the institution's origin of governance acted as a catalyst for unequal representation of gender in the United States, incumbency advantage has sustained this political phenomenon throughout history. Female membership has never amounted to more than 20 percent in Congress. Subsequently, at least an 80 percent majority of male *incumbents* have dominated the national ticket in every federal election since the country's founding. As a result, incumbency advantage continues to plague progress toward gender parity in the modern Congress.

Incumbent advantages during congressional campaigns limit the likelihood that emerging female candidates will win these seats. Incumbents leverage the resources of their office as a platform for messaging and constituent engagement, benefit from name recognition, and establish lucrative fundraising avenues while elected. David Mayhew's study on the declining margins of congressional turnover introduced the concept of "incumbency advantage" to the discipline in 1974.⁶⁰ Since Mayhew's initial research, competition in federal elections continues to decline, with the percentage of moderately competitive incumbent races hitting a record low of 17 percent in the 2002 and 2004 elections.⁶¹ With progressively less opportunity for female candidates to replace male

⁶⁰ David R. Mayhew, "Congressional Elections: The Case of the Vanishing Marginals" *Polity* 6 (Spring 1974).

⁶¹ Abramowitz, Alan I., Brad Alexander, and Matthew Gunning. "Incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections." *The Journal of Politics* 68, no. 1 (2006): 75-88.

incumbents, the path to achieving gender equality will continue to be challenged by this institutional barrier.

In the 1990's, a campaign led by Americans to Limit Congressional Terms and the U.S. Term Limits Foundation propelled concerns for diminishing election competitiveness to the forefront of national conversation by proposing federal term limits as the solution. In a 1995 congressional testimony to the U.S Senate's Subcommittee on the Constitution, the co-founder of the CATO Institute, Edward Crane, advocated for the implementation of federal term limits in order to end incumbent advantages and encourage the diversification of representation in Congress. He testified,

Shorter [term] limits for the House are guaranteed to enhance the competitiveness of elections and, as noted above, increase the number and diversity of Americans choosing to run for Congress. As Paul Jacob of U.S. Term Limits has pointed out, the most competitive races (and the ones that bring out the largest number of primary candidacies) are for open seats. At least a third of all House seats will be open under three term limits each election, with the likelihood that as many as half will not feature an incumbent seeking reelection. We know from past experience that women and minorities have greater electoral success in open seat races.⁶²

⁶² Edward H. Crane, "Congressional Term Limits." Cato Institute, January 25, 1995, <https://www.cato.org/publications/congressionaltestimony/congressionaltermlimits>

Crane and his supporters witnessed mild success. By 2001, 18 states had enacted term limits for their legislative branches.⁶³

While this Chapter highlights incumbency advantage as an institutional barrier to gender parity, it does not recommend federal policymakers amend federal election laws to establish congressional term limits. In fact, members that serve multiple terms often improve the institution of Congress. A former Congressional Staffer to a U.S. Senator explains the benefit membership expertise has on the institution,

“When my former boss assumed responsibility as Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security Committee and Governmental Affairs, he didn’t have the slightest clue what malicious software was, let alone, how to protect Americans from it. So, he spent years talking to industry stakeholders, the brightest minds in academia, and experts throughout state and federal governments. Today, this baby boomer knows more about the challenges facing the nation’s cybersecurity than anyone serving in Washington. When he retires, the country will lose his invaluable wealth of knowledge.”⁶⁴

Furthermore, Gender scholars from Rutgers University’s Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) tested the CATO Institute’s claim that term limits would increase the number of women in legislatures. However, they concluded that term limits may actually have the adverse effect. In 2001, Susan Carroll and Krista Jenkins examined

63 Susan J. Carroll and Krista Jenkins. "Do Term Limits Help Women Get Elected?" *Social Science Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (2001): 197-201.

64 Courtney Fillmore, (Interview by Jessica Kuron, February 15, 2017.)

the impact of state term limits on the diversity of legislative membership. While their research took place only three years after the first round of forced retirement in only six states, early evidence suggested that the number of women serving in these state legislatures had actually decreased between 1998-2000, because more women were forced to vacate their seats than were newly elected. Furthermore, they found that men replaced roughly 71 percent of the seats vacated by women that were forced out by term limits.⁶⁵

RECOMMENDATION 2: STATE TERM LIMITS

While Carroll and Jenkin's practical contribution concluded that state term limits fail to increase the number of women serving in state legislatures, their research raises further questions. Specifically, do *state* term limits promote gender parity in the *federal* legislature? Data collected, organized, and analyzed for this Chapter concludes that states with term limits are more likely to elect women to federal office and that they are closer to reaching gender parity in the United States Congress than states without these constraints. This evidence suggests that state term limits reduce the impact of incumbency advantage by propelling female leaders with previously established platforms for engagement, name recognition, and fundraising avenues into federal elections.

Data derived from the U.S. Government Publishing Office's Congressional Directory was arranged to capture membership from all fifty states by legislative session,

⁶⁵ Julie Dolan, Michelle Swers, and Melissa M. Deckman. *Women and Politics: Paths to Power and Political Influence*. (Boston: Longman, 2011).

the number of representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives per state, and the number of female representatives in the House per state. Fifteen states were identified as having state term limits as of 2017: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota. Since three of these states (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Nevada) did not see forced retirement from term limits until 2007-2008, only data from the 110th- 115th Congresses was considered.

Table 2.0 highlights the major findings from this research. Since the 110th Congress, almost half of all female members serving in the U.S. House of Representatives were elected in the fifteen states with state term limits. In other words, only thirty percent of all fifty states have term limits, yet nearly half of all the women serving in Congress were elected by these states. This evidence overwhelmingly suggests states with term limits foster a political environment more likely to elect women to federal office.

Table 2.0

Percentage of Total Female Membership

Congress	<u>15</u> States with Term Limits	<u>35</u> States without Term Limits
115 th	42.17%	57.83%
114 th	45.12%	54.88%
113 th	42.85%	57.15%
112 th	45.94%	54.06%
111 th	51.32%	48.68%
110 th	48.64%	51.36%

Considering Carroll and Jenkin’s research concluded that state term limits forced more female members to vacate their seats than were newly elected in 2001, a likely explanation for the findings in Table 2.0 is that female state leaders are more inclined to seek higher office following forced retirement from State Legislatures. In fact, prevalent theoretical research on female political ambition supports this hypothesis. An interview by Julie Dolan captures the discipline’s sentiment as it pertains to female ambition to seek higher office, “Men decide to run two hours after someone in the law firm says, ‘You’ve got to run,’ ... The average woman takes two years to decide. She’ll wait until she has the perfect campaign manager, the right 17 endorsements; until she’s gotten down to the perfect size 20 and the kids are out of school.”⁶⁶ With forced retirement at the state level, experienced female leaders have time to prepare for a congressional run. They know exactly when they will term out and do not have the option to compare their qualifications to the male candidate if they want to remain employed.

Further, states with term limits are closer to reaching gender parity in the United States Congress. Tables 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 highlight the percentage of female representatives from states with term limits and states without term limits, as these figures relate to the total possible seats in each category. For example, California has 53 total members in the House of Representatives, and 17 of these members are women—its membership is 32 percent female. This research highlights that states with term limits

⁶⁶Ibid., 141.

collectively elected a critical mass (≥ 20 percent) of women in every Congress, whereas, states without term limits did not.

Table 2.1

Percentage of Total Female Membership

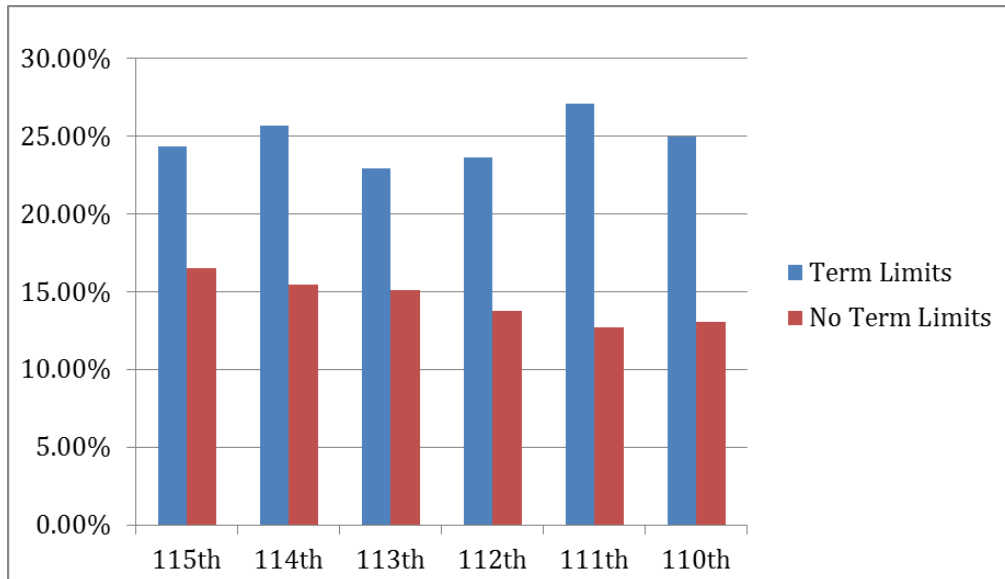


Table 2.2

Total Possible Membership in States Without Term Limits

Congress	Total Congressional Seats	Female Members	Percentage of Female Members
115th	291	48	16.49%
114th	291	45	15.46%
113th	291	44	15.12%
112th	291	40	13.75%
111th	291	37	12.71%
110th	291	38	13.06%

Table 2.3

Total Possible Membership in States With Term Limits

Congress	Total Congressional Seats	Female Members	Percentage of Female Members
115th	144	35	24.31%
114th	144	37	25.69%
113th	144	33	22.92%
112th	144	34	23.61%
111th	144	39	27.08%
110th	144	36	25.00%

However, some states with term limits have more success electing female members than others, and it is clear other factors contribute to the election of women beyond state term limit. Tables 2.4- 2.9 highlight the individuality of each state and their ability to elect a critical mass of women (≥ 20 percent). Because states drastically vary in the total number of possible congressional seats, this data has been organized into three categories. Smaller states with four members or less in the United States House of Representatives offer less certainty on the role of term limits within these delegations, because their statistics often fail to capture their electorate's willingness to elect women over men. While larger states with more than 25 total possible seats provide more clarity

on a state's likelihood to elect women to federal office, they are also more likely to have additional factors contributing to their election results. Subsequently, states with possible membership ranging from four to 25 representatives provide the best assessment for whether term limits promote gender equality within each state. Regardless of size, all but two states with term limits (Arkansas and Montana) achieved a critical mass of female membership of at least 20 percent between the 115th-110th Congresses.

Table 2.4

Percentage of Female Membership in Small States (≤ 4) with Term Limits

	115th	114th	113th	112th	111th	110th
Arkansas	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Maine	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Montana	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Nebraska	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Nevada	66.67%	33.33%	50.00%	33.33%	66.67%	33.33%
North Dakota	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
South Dakota	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 2.5

Percentage of Female Membership in Small States (≤ 4) without Term Limits

	115th	114th	113th	112th	111th	110th
Alaska	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Delaware	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Hawaii	100.00%	50.00%	0.00%	100.00%	50.00%	50.00%
Idaho	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Iowa	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Kansas	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%
Mississippi	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
New Hampshire	100.00%	50.00%	33.33%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%
New Mexico	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%
Rhode Island	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Utah	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Vermont	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
West Virginia	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%
Wyoming	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 2.6

Percentage of Female Congressional Membership in Medium States (5-25)
With Term Limits

	115th	114th	113th	112th	111th	110th
Arizona	25.00%	37.50%	14.29%	0.00%	25.00%	12.50%
Colorado	14.29%	14.29%	0.00%	14.29%	28.57%	28.57%
Louisiana	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Michigan	13.33%	20.00%	6.67%	6.67%	13.33%	13.33%
Missouri	22.22%	22.22%	22.22%	22.22%	11.11%	11.11%
Oklahoma	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%

Table 2.7

Percentage of Female Congressional Membership in Medium States (5-25)
Without Term Limits

	115th	114th	113th	112th	111th	110th
Alabama	28.57%	28.57%	28.57%	28.57%	0.00%	0.00%
Connecticut	40.00%	40.00%	40.00%	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%
Georgia	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	7.69%
Illinois	15.79%	21.05%	15.79%	10.53%	21.05%	10.53%
Indiana	22.22%	22.22%	22.22%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Kentucky	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Maryland	0.00%	12.50%	12.50%	12.50%	12.50%	12.50%
Massachusetts	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%
Minnesota	12.50%	12.50%	25.00%	12.50%	25.00%	25.00%
New Jersey	7.69%	7.69%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

North Carolina	15.38%	23.08%	23.08%	23.08%	15.38%	23.08%
Ohio	16.67%	16.67%	11.11%	22.22%	27.78%	27.78%
Oregon	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%	0.00%	20.00%
Pennsylvania	0.00%	0.00%	5.26%	5.26%	10.53%	5.26%
South Carolina	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Tennessee	22.22%	11.11%	22.22%	22.22%	11.11%	11.11%
Virginia	9.09%	9.09%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%
Washington	44.44%	33.33%	33.33%	11.11%	11.11%	11.11%
Wisconsin	12.50%	12.50%	12.50%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%

Table 2.8

Percentage of Female Congressional Membership in Large States (≥ 25)
With Term Limits

	115th	114th	113th	112th	111th	110th
California	32.08%	33.96%	33.96%	37.74%	39.62%	39.62%
Florida	28.00%	28.00%	24.00%	28.00%	24.00%	24.00%

Table 2.9

Percentage of Female Congressional Membership in Large States (≥ 25)
Without Term Limits

	115th	114th	113th	112th	111th	110th
New York	31.03%	27.59%	20.69%	34.48%	20.69%	24.14%
Texas	9.38%	9.38%	9.38%	6.25%	9.38%	6.25%

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

It is difficult to separate the undeniable evidence of gender bias, outlined in the previous chapter, from sustained unequal representation in modern America. However, this Chapter intended to remove the underlying emotion often associated with inequality in order to investigate the possibility of additional barriers delaying men and women from achieving parity. As a result, this research identified two institutional barriers sustaining gender inequality in the United States, and offered policymakers practical approaches to transform the institution to be more appealing to women and counter the influence of incumbency advantage in federal elections.

This Chapter expanded on the study of traditional gender identities to include an analysis of lingering *patriarchal* dominance and its role in crafting an additional barrier contributing to sustained unequal representation, which is that a male style of governance continues to dominate institutional culture. Further, researched derived from congressional election data suggests that state term limits reduce the impact of incumbency advantage on gender inequality by encouraging female leaders with established platforms for engagement, name recognition, and fundraising avenues to run for federal office. This research concluded that states with term limits are more likely to elect women to federal office, and they are also closer to reaching gender parity in the United States Congress than states without these limitations.

Figure 2.0 outlines the observations discussed in this chapter, and the key recommendations made in order to overcome these institutional barriers.

Figure 2.0

Observations	Recommendations
<p>1. A male style of governance and leadership is engrained into the country's political institutions from its origin.</p>	<p>1. Leaders in Congress need to foster an environment more appealing to qualified women by challenging the narrative surrounding work/life balance, and embracing female leadership styles in institutional processes.</p>
<p>2. Incumbency advantages limit the likelihood that emerging female candidates will win federal seats, because the 80 percent majority of male incumbents benefit from the resources of their office during reelection.</p>	<p>2. State leaders can reduce the impact of incumbency advantage on federal elections by implementing term limits in State Legislatures, because states with term limits encourage female leaders with previously established platforms for engagement, name recognition, and fundraising avenues to run for federal office; and subsequently, elect more women to Congress.</p>

CHAPTER 3: GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES TO PROMOTING GENDER PARITY

CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

*“One cannot deal with the problem of [unequal] female representation [...] alone. Political parties, the educational system, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), [...] all must take responsibility within their own organizations to systematically promote women's [political] participation, from the bottom up.”*⁶⁷ The first two chapters of this thesis extensively highlight the deeply rooted societal and institutional barriers contributing to sustained unequal representation of gender in the United States Congress, including the gender gap in political candidacies, institutional culture, and incumbency advantage. This final chapter intends to offer the discipline and policymakers analyses of international efforts to promote gender parity in government.

As of 2017, the United States ranked behind 100 nations in the percentage of women serving in international parliaments; therefore, American policymakers can benefit from considering global best practices that more successfully promote female representation.⁶⁸ James Madison supported the practice of deliberating foreign policies in the Legislature when cultural barriers placed limitations on domestic progress. In his Federalist Paper #63, Madison stated “an attention to the judgment of other nations is important to every government: [...] in doubtful cases, particularly where the national councils may be warped by some strong passion or momentary interest, the presumed or

⁶⁷ Birgitta Dahl, Speaker of Parliament, Sweden

⁶⁸ Women in Parliaments: World Classification. *Inter-Parliamentary Union*, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.html>.

known opinion of the impartial world may be the best guide that can be followed.”⁶⁹ In other words, learning from global best practices in order to shape domestic policy is not a revolutionary idea, yet the discipline often fails to consider the international community’s experience with this political phenomenon. Therefore, this Chapter will provide analyses of efforts and policies that promote female representation internationally, and assess their value to U.S. policymakers attempting to understand the challenges and solutions associated with sustained unequal representation of gender in the United States Congress.

WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

International voters are electing women to govern at an impressive rate. The International Organization of Parliaments of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) assesses representative governments worldwide, and their 2016 analysis of “Women in Parliament” provides a comprehensive report highlighting these successes. According to IPU’s research, the worldwide average of women in national parliaments rose from 11.3 percent in 1995 to 16.8 percent in 2006, and again, to 23.3 percent in 2017, which is an average gain of six percent every decade.⁷⁰ More notably, every region of the world is contributing to this global increase in female representation since 1995, including the Americas (+15.4 percent); Sub-Saharan Africa (+13.8 percent); the Arab States (+13.7 percent); Europe (+13.1 percent); the Pacific (+11.1); and Asia (+6.1 percent).⁷¹ The international parliaments included in these impressive statistics differ in their election

⁶⁹ James Madison, “The Federalist Paper #63,” (Constitution Society: Everything needed to decide constitutional issues,) <http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa63.htm>.

⁷⁰ “Women in Parliaments: World Classification.”

⁷¹ “Women in Parliaments: World Classification.”

systems, their commitment to promoting female inclusion in public life, and they receive varying degrees of support from non-profit organizations. This Thesis does not intend to suggest the United States Constitution should be amended to allow for the implementation of international policies; however, assessing the methods that promote gender equality within foreign governments can assist policymakers in conceptualizing solutions to the unique challenges limiting parity in the United States.

ELECTION QUOTAS

Election systems throughout the world have adopted variations of quota policies in order to promote equal representation of gender and minorities. Some governments reserve a pre-determined number of parliamentary seats for women, while others implement voluntary measures in their candidate recruitment processes. In order to enforce these types of policies, governments often withhold funding from national political parties that have not met the mandated election quota. For example, political parties in Ireland lose half of their state funding “unless at least 30 per cent of their candidates [are] women and at least 30 percent are men.”⁷² According to Drude Dahlerup from the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, “the advantage of the quota system is that it forces the nominating bodies, especially the political parties, to engage in an active recruitment process. In so doing it also focuses their attention on the actual working conditions and culture of politics, thus encouraging the possibility of making

⁷² <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/36/enacted/en/print.html>

political participation more attractive for women.”⁷³ However, countries that implement quota systems often experience additional challenges electing women, resulting from deeply rooted cultural barriers. Nonetheless, data collected for the IPU’s 2016 report suggests countries with quota systems elect more women, regardless of the policy’s specific measures or challenges.

Mandated Reserved Seats

The rapid increase of women elected in Morocco over the past decade highlights the benefits associated with quota systems that legislatively mandate reserve parliamentary seats for female candidates. Since King Mohammed VI reformed the constitution and increased the gender election quota following the Arab Spring, women have doubled their presence in the nation’s parliament from 10.5 percent in 2011 to 20.5 percent in 2016. This policy incentivized even more Moroccan women to seek political office, and resulted in female candidates obtaining 10 additional parliamentary seats beyond their national quota in the 2016 election.⁷⁴

Uganda witnessed similar success from gender election quotas mandated in 1995; however, a lack of societal acceptance and financial constraints shed light on the potential limitations of these policies. While the country’s gender quota resulted in a critical mass of female representatives in 2016, with 34.3 percent of parliamentary seats held by women, progress has stalled since previous elections. Unlike the case of Morocco, Ugandan women struggle to obtain additional representation beyond their allotted

73 Drude Dahlerup, “Using Quota’s to Increase Women’s Political Representation,” *International IDEA*, (2002): 5.

74 “Women in parliament in 2016: The Year in Review,” *Union Interparlementaire*, (2016):

percentage of seats. A study by IPU found that Ugandan voters believe, “women should not contest open seats, as they have reserved seats, and would therefore increase the pressure on open seats for male candidates.”⁷⁵ Additionally, Uganda’s Parliamentary Elections Act now requires aspiring candidates to pay a nomination fee of 3,000,000 Ugandan shillings (approximately US\$ 830), further shrinking the pool of eligible female candidates.⁷⁶

Voluntary Political Party Measures

The quota system adopted in Norway offers a unique case study of voluntary political party measures that aim to recruit and support a pre-determined number of female candidates, as the Norwegian Labour Party decided in 1983 that in “all elections and nominations both sexes must be represented by at least 40 per cent.”⁷⁷ Decades of data provides evidence for the challenges and benefits associated with voluntary political party measures. For example, the Norwegian Labour Party’s quota system allows incumbency to supersede their measure. Therefore, women only gradually gained seats as men vacated them. The delay experienced in Norway suggests it takes roughly three election cycles to implement similar voluntary political party measures. However, the Norwegian Labour Party eventually succeeded, and 50 percent of the party’s faction was female in 2016.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Dahlerup, 4.

⁷⁸ Dahlerup, 5.

While the Norwegian Labour Party advanced in their goal to be inclusive of female candidates, the quota system in the Philippines represents the opposite extreme of potential outcomes for voluntary political party measures. In 2010, the Philippines issued the Magna Carta of Women (MCW), which encourages the promotion of women in leadership roles by providing incentives to political parties that integrate female agendas and women into their nomination process.⁷⁹ As a result, pro-women organizations have emerged and adopted voluntary political party measures, electing female representatives to 25 percent of parliamentary seats in 2016.⁸⁰ However, Filipino women continue to face cultural barriers in their efforts to advance in public life, including gender stereotyping, limited political education, and rejection from additional political parties.⁸¹ The Philippine Commission on Women reported that further progress depends on the establishment of leadership and capability development programs, advocacy for shared responsibility in the home, and the full implementation of the temporary special measures of the MCW.⁸² In other words, government incentivized quota measures are not enough, and Filipino women require additional services and policies to transform cultural norms.

Analysis: Election Quotas in the United States

Election quotas are unlikely to be successful in the United States, and policymakers should not consider them as realistic methods to promoting gender parity in Congress. As noted extensively in previous chapters, political parties and the American

⁷⁹ "Philippine Commission on Women." Leadership and Political Participation | Philippine Commission on Women. Accessed October 04, 2017. <http://pcw.gov.ph/focus-areas/leadership-political-participation>.

⁸⁰ "Women in Parliament in 2016, The Year in Review," 7.

⁸¹ "Philippine Commission on Women."

⁸² Ibid.

electorate no longer discriminate against female candidates; women simply do not choose to run for office as often as men do. Therefore, government incentivized political party measures, like the Filipino model, would serve little benefit to recruitment processes, because U.S. political parties already embrace interested and qualified female candidates when they choose to run. Additionally, quota systems impede upon constitutionally protected rights, as Article 1 of the U.S. Constitution designates primary responsibility for election regulations to the states.⁸³ In other words, states determine their own election laws, and cannot be mandated by the federal government or national political parties to be more inclusive of women. Considering quota systems are most effectively incentivized and enforced through government funding, current U.S campaign finance laws also do not support these types of policies, because they allow political parties to independently fundraise. Furthermore, this Thesis sheds significant light on the societal barriers sustaining gender inequality in Congress, and the cultural challenges limiting progress in Uganda and the Philippines further suggest quota systems are unrealistic in the United States. Even if quota policies were adopted by federal or state governments, progress would likely stall at the pre-determined percentage of seats reserved for women, because these policies are not likely to change institutional culture or increase political ambition in qualified women.

While election quotas are unrealistic in the United States, these policies would promote gender parity in Congress by eliminating incumbency advantage. Incumbent

⁸³ Edmin Meese III, "The Heritage Guide to The Constitution," (Guide to the Constitution, October 08, 2017,) <http://www.heritage.org/constitution/#!/articles/1/essays/19/election-regulations>.

advantages, like name recognition and established fundraising avenues, limit the likelihood that emerging female candidates will win their seats. Considering male incumbents dominate Congress with 80 percent of legislative seats in 2017, incumbency advantage has real consequences for qualified women seeking political office. A quota system that reserved a pre-determined percentage of seats for American women would undoubtedly eliminate this institutional barrier to gender parity.

COMMITMENT FROM POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

While election quotas aggressively change the fundamental structures of election systems, political leadership can more discreetly promote gender equality through formal commitments to raising public awareness and increasing female engagement in political processes. Actions taken by government leaders to foster political environments that are more conducive to women have taken many forms. As noted in the first chapter, female leaders can serve as positive role models and encourage political ambition in other qualified women. President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir of Iceland proves that political leaders can effectively promote gender equality, as she acknowledges that her two decades of service changed the female mindset in Iceland, “I am glad that I have been able to help give women self-confidence in Iceland. They come to me, and they say ‘for all of these years, you have been a role model for me.’ They tell me they think ‘if she could do it, I

can do it.’ This makes me very happy.”⁸⁴ Other governments, like Afghanistan, promote female leadership in government by committing to education initiatives. Since 2001, the Government of Afghanistan, in partnership with the international community, has committed to investing vast resources in training programs to encourage female leadership in politics, business, and civil society.⁸⁵

Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration

The Pacific Leader’s Gender Equality Declaration provides an example of the potential impact formal political commitments can have in efforts to promote gender equality. In August 2012, the region’s Heads of State and Governments met in the Cook Islands for The Forty-Third Pacific Islands Forum, where they re-energized their collective commitment to “lift the status of women in the Pacific and empower them to be active participants in economic, political, and social life.”⁸⁶ Their declaration encouraged partnering nations to adopt legislative gender quotas and implement political training opportunities for women.⁸⁷ Early evidence suggests this regional approach is working. According to the IPU, the regional average of women in Pacific parliaments continues to rise annually, up by 1.6 percent in the 2016 elections.⁸⁸

84 Alicia Adamczyk, "Countries That Have Had a Female Head of State or Government | Money." *Time.com*, July 2016, <http://time.com/money/4362191/female-heads-of-state/>.
<http://www.thetoolbox.org/articles/3221-iceland-s-lead-role-in-creating-a-lasting-legacy-of-empowerment#.WdlrLFtSzIV>

85Aarya Nijat and Jennifer Murtazashvili, "Women’s Leadership Roles in Afghanistan," *United States Institution of Peace, Special Report*, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR380_Women-s-Leadership-Roles-in-Afghanistan.pdf

86 "The Pacific Leader’s Gender Equality Declaration," (Forty- Third Pacific Island Forum, Cooks Island, August 2012):13.

87Ibid.

88"Women in Parliament in 2016, The Year in Review," 2.

The Pacific Island Forum's commitment to increasing female representation in legislatures and other decision-making offices challenged the status quo and put the issue of gender equality at the forefront of political debate in participating nations. For example, Sandra Pierantozzi, a 2016 presidential candidate in Palau, campaigned on the issue of gender equality. Her message included rhetoric advocating for women. She called for women, "to balance the agenda of male politicians [because] all they want to do is build big infrastructure and build bridges. But smaller things like social welfare, the good of the people, health education... men don't really pay much attention to these other things"⁸⁹ While Pierantozzi lost the Presidential election, Palau's 2016 parliamentary elections resulted in the highest number of women elected in the country's history, and they achieved this without mandating gender quotas.⁹⁰ Considering the previously noted correlation between role models and political ambition, it is reasonable to conclude that the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration provided Pierantozzi's a platform for her gender advocacy, which in turn, inspired unprecedented female political participation in Palau.

Regional leaders that participated in the Forty-Third Pacific Islands Forum also support partnering nations in their individual efforts to increase female representation. Following the adoption of the Gender Equality Declaration in 2012, the Independent State of Samoa amended their constitution to reserve a minimum of five of the 49

89 "More women needed in Palau government." Radio New Zealand. September 26, 2016. Accessed October 04, 2017. <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/314182/more-women-needed-in-palau-government>.

90 "Women in Parliament in 2016, The Year in Review," 2.

parliamentary seats for female members.⁹¹ While 10 percent of Samoa's parliamentary seats are now occupied by women, societal barriers continue to challenge public acceptance of female representation and the country expects cultural norms will limit further progress. Recognizing these challenges, the Government of Australia funded the National University of Samoa to study the political participation of Samoan women. Their research captured campaign experiences of female candidates and lessons learned from the 2016 election, which will likely aid the next generation of Samoans and regional partners in their progress toward gender parity.

Analysis: Women in Congress

International efforts, and contributions made throughout this Thesis, suggest that the women currently serving in Congress are one of the most appropriate formal networks to encourage political ambition in American women, and ultimately, promote gender equality in the United States Congress. The Congressional Women's Caucus "serves as an inspiration and a model worldwide for women parliamentarians – whose image of American democracy is shaped in part by the example of women from different political parties working together to improve the lives of women and families." Therefore, it would be within the parameters of their mission for female congressional

91Mitiana Arbon, "Record number of female candidates in the 2016 Samoan General Election," *The Moonshine Project*, (2016) <https://themonsoonproject.org/2016/03/03/record-number-of-female-candidates-in-the-2016-samoan-general-election/>.

leaders to embrace a collective and bi-partisan commitment to publically advocate for equal representation of gender in the United States Congress.⁹²

A formal commitment made by the women in Congress to empower qualified female candidates would increase female political ambition and reduce the gender gap in political candidacies, weakening this societal barrier to gender parity. As previously noted, there is consensus among the discipline that a gender gap in political ambition results in less women choosing to run for office than men, and subsequently, less female role models to encourage future political participation. The Congressional Women's Caucus is an established network of female political role models, equipped with a national platform for messaging and the credibility to inspire female political participation. Further, a commitment from leadership raises public awareness and brings gender issues to the forefront of political debate, as seen in the case of Palau. If the women in Congress publically unified around the issue of gender parity, as they have done on other global and domestic women's issues, they would raise national awareness for the benefits of female representation and create a public platform for sexism and perceived gender identities to be openly debated in political campaigns.

Female congressional leaders can also reduce the impacts of institutional barriers sustaining unequal representation of gender, like a one-sided perspective of governance and incumbency advantage, by recruiting and/or supporting qualified female candidates. A bi-partisan commitment from the women in Congress to increase recruitment efforts in

⁹² "Caucus Accomplishments." *Women's Congressional Policy Institute*, <http://www.womenspolicy.org/our-work/the-womens-caucus/caucus-accomplishments/>.

order to encourage, educate, and empower qualified female candidates would transform the institution. As seen in the case of Australia's commitment to Samoa, soft influence by-way-of education supports the next generation of female leaders and ultimately promotes progress toward gender parity.

NON-PROFIT SUPPORT NETWORKS

Many global best practices to promote gender equality in national parliaments reside in the private sector, as nonprofit organizations recruit and train qualified women to run for office and raise public awareness for the benefits of parity. Many female advocacy organizations navigate political landscapes using non-conventional methods to influence government and the electorate from outside of the public sphere. Other organizations more directly advocate for gender parity from within political systems in order to change national gender policies and influence party selection processes. Regardless of their approach, non-profits have proven to be successful support networks for qualified female candidates throughout the world, and policymakers should consider their methods as global best practices to promoting gender parity in government.

Women for Election

One of the most effective ways for non-profit support networks to encourage female inclusion in government is through political education programs. As referenced in the first chapter, gender scholars found that men are 60 percent more likely than women to assess themselves as "very qualified" to run for office. Non-profit organizations, like Women for Election in Ireland, increase confidence in qualified women by training them to gain the skills necessary to get elected and succeed in public office. Their faculty of policy experts and political professionals cover all components of campaigning,

“including building committed teams, effective planning and administration, fundraising and budgeting, message development, presentation skills and managing the media.”⁹³ In their 2017 #MoreWomen crowdfunding campaign, Women for Election raised enough donations to train 300 Irish women seeking office in the 2019 elections.

Womanity Foundation

Non-profit support networks also raise awareness for the benefits of gender parity and challenge societal norms limiting the inclusion of women in government. For example, the Womanity Foundation builds awareness for the importance of female participation in democratic processes in the Middle East and North Africa, by utilizing social media to stimulate debate on cultural identities. According to Womanity Foundation, “issues that affect women [in the region], such as their role in society, their rights and responsibilities, and the problems they face in private and in public, are taboo and rarely discussed. Consequently, there are few public platforms for an open dialogue to address them and discuss ways for women to maintain their cultural identities while pursuing their aspirations and realizing their full potential.”⁹⁴ In an effort to counter these societal barriers to gender equality, the Womanity Foundation launched the Worth 100 Men Campaign, which follows the lives of women in public life in order to highlight female prejudices and propose creative ways to empower women in the region.⁹⁵ The

⁹³ "About Us," Women For Election, (October 08, 2017) <http://www.womenforelection.ie/about-us/>.

⁹⁴ "About Us – B100 Ragl," (B100 Ragl, October 2017) <http://b100ragl.com/en/about-us/>.

⁹⁵ "Training and educating women: The Womanity Foundation," (The Womanity Foundation, October 2017,) <https://womanity.org/about-us/>.

Worth 100 Men video-on-demand service is widely successful, reporting an average of 13.3 million visitors each month.

Analysis: Emily's List

The election of President Donald J. Trump in November 2016 mobilized pro-equality organizations, like Emily's List, to encourage American women to run for office at an unprecedented rate. Through their Run to Win Campaign, Emily's List recruited over 18,000 women to participate in political training programs between January and October 2017.⁹⁶ This extraordinary response suggests that non-profit support networks promoting equal representation in the United States will increasingly gain momentum, encouraging more and more women to run for office over the next several years.

Emily's List promotes gender parity in the United States Congress by offering alternatives to the traditional candidate recruitment processes that many scholars believe limit female access to political networks. As referenced in the first chapter, an academic survey found that women reported being formally asked to run for office half as often as the men did.⁹⁷ While theories on gender discrimination during party recruitment are often flawed, non-profit support networks undoubtedly provide an unconventional avenue for women to enter the public sphere without perceiving bias. For example, Emily's List has transformed the political recruitment process by rejecting preconceived qualifications and encouraging all women to run, "you don't have to have years of political experience, a Ph.D., or a law degree to run for office. You know when policies work for you and your

⁹⁶ "EMILY's List: Run to Win," (October 2017,) <http://emilyslist.org/run-to-win/about>.

⁹⁷ Lawless, Jennifer L., and Richard Logan Fox. "It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office," 44.

family and when they don't. Your experience is what your community needs in office and there is no better time than now to get started.”⁹⁸

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The international policies and efforts analyzed throughout this chapter highlight the common challenges to achieving gender parity throughout the world, and assist in conceptualizing innovative solutions to diminish the societal and institutional barriers sustaining unequal representation in the United States. While quota systems, formal commitments from political leaders, and non-profit support networks provide practical approaches to promoting female inclusion in government, none of these efforts will individually end the American struggle to achieve gender parity. Therefore, policymakers and scholars should only consider them as *methods* to promote equal representation in Congress.

Many of the examples outlined in this chapter highlighted cultural barriers as a common challenge, which suggests public awareness campaigns must be a component of any policy or effort to promote female inclusion in government. For example, perceived gender roles in the Philippines, Uganda, and Samoa obstruct women from obtaining additional representation beyond their quota mandates. The Womanity Foundation recognized similar cultural constraints in the Middle East and North Africa, stating that issues important to women like equal representation, “are taboo and rarely discussed” in

⁹⁸ “Emily’s List: Run to Win”

the region.⁹⁹ Considering lingering gender identities are also a societal barrier sustaining unequal representation in the United States, public awareness campaigns aiming to transform public perception of gender roles, like the Womanity Foundation's 100 Men Campaign, should be considered by policymakers as a best practice and used as a model to promote gender parity.

Similarly, political training programs appear to be a global best practice that would support efforts to reduce the gender gap in political candidacies in the United States. Political training programs can be formally implemented by national policy, or adopted by non-profit support networks, as seen in a variety of cases analyzed throughout this chapter. For example, political leaders in the Pacific committed to offering political training opportunities for women, which contributes to the continuous rise in female representation throughout the region. Further, Women for Election provides high quality training programs for hundreds of women running for office in Ireland every election cycle. The impressive response to Emily's List's Run to Win campaign suggests that political training programs will encourage confidence in American women and reduce the gender gap in political ambition.

Figure 3.0 outlines the observations discussed in this chapter, and the key recommendations made in order to overcome the societal and institutional barriers contributing to unequal representation of gender in the United States Congress.

⁹⁹ "Training and educating women: The Womanity Foundation."

Figure 3.0

Observations	Recommendations
<p>1. Election systems throughout the world have adopted variations of quota policies in order to promote equal representation of gender and minorities, including mandated reserved seats and voluntary political party measures.</p>	<p>1. Election quotas are unlikely to achieve gender parity in the United States Congress, because U.S. political parties already embrace qualified female candidates when they choose to run; quota systems impede upon constitutionally protected rights; they are not supported by current campaign finance laws; and they are not likely to reduce societal barriers to parity.</p>
<p>2. Political leadership can promote gender equality through formal commitments to raising public awareness and increasing female engagement in political processes.</p>	<p>2. Women serving in Congress and non-profit support networks are the most appropriate groups to promote gender equality in the United States Congress, because they can reduce the gender gap in political candidacies by increasing female political ambition; and reduce the impacts of institutional barriers by recruiting and/or supporting qualified female candidates.</p>
<p>3. Nonprofit organizations recruit and train qualified women to run for office and raise public awareness for the benefits of parity.</p>	<p>3. Methods used by non-profit organizations, like political training programs and public awareness campaigns promote gender parity in the United States. Public awareness campaigns must be a component of any policy or effort to promote female inclusion in government, and policymakers should support political training programs as they reduce the gender gap in political candidacies.</p>

THESIS CONCLUSION

Following her second electoral victory, 30 years after her first, Jeannette Rankin said, “*There is nothing unusual about a woman being elected.*” Congresswoman Rankin’s remarks from 1941 may sound inaccurate to Americans in 2017, considering women remain significantly under-represented in the federal legislature and a female has yet to serve as President of the United States. However, Rankin’s statement reflects the modern political reality: voters elect women at the same rate as male candidates; women are simply not running for office as often as men. This gender gap in candidacies prevents parity in the federal legislature, which has significant consequences for both men and women. This Thesis sought to better understand the societal and institutional barriers contributing to sustained unequal representation of gender in order to offer policymakers practical approaches to promote parity in the United States.

A literature review, completed early on in this research, determined that the study of unequal representation is often plagued with emotion, due to perceived sexism and gender discrimination prevalent throughout American society. Subsequently, the majority of scholars in this field premise their research on the inaccurate assumption that gender bias behavior from the media, political parties, and the electorate are leading factors sustaining inequality. However, this initial literature review concluded that, even though evidence of sexism in American culture certainly exists, this behavior no longer influences voter’s decisions at the polls. The outcome of the 2016 Presidential Election highlights this point well. Even though national media outlets were criticized for blatant discriminatory remarks toward the female democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, she still

received nearly three million more votes than her male opponent.¹⁰⁰ In other words, even when the media and political parties act with gender bias behavior, it no longer persuades the electorate to not vote for women, which is a fact often missed by gender scholars. These findings were adopted as the premise for the arguments made throughout this Thesis, and they served as the parameters and scope in which research was conducted. This Thesis ultimately proposed that there are three societal and institutional barriers sustaining unequal representation of gender in the federal legislature: (1) there is a gender gap in political ambition; (2) the culture of the institution; and (3) incumbency advantage.

The first chapter aimed to investigate the gender gap in political candidacies. By collecting and analyzing federal election data, this research determined that there are, historically, too few women on the ballot to result in equal representation of gender in the United States Congress. Even in the event that every female candidate running for federal office in 2014 succeeded, female membership would only have amounted to a mere 26 percent in the Senate and 22 percent in the House of Representatives. In an effort to determine why this is the case, an exploratory study on the history of female political influence was conducted. This research concluded that American women have a long history of influencing public life through non-conventional methods of political participation, like organizing boycotts and grassroots campaigns. Among many other political accomplishments, women utilized these methods of political engagement to collectively boycott British tea in 1773, create national academic networks in order claim

¹⁰⁰ Hilln, Taryn. "Here's every wildly sexist moment from the 2016 presidential election." (Business Insider. November 06, 2016. <http://www.businessinsider.com/heres-everywildly-sexist-moment-from-the-2016-presidential-election-2016-11>).

their right to an education, organize petition campaigns to give birth to the temperance and abolition movements of the 1830's, and secure a constitutional amendment granting them the right to vote. American women have witnessed political success, without formal representation, because they are experts at exercising public influence through these non-formal means of political participation. In modern America, women continue to embrace this traditional female identity by bolstering their influence as leaders in the private sector, as advocates, and through social status, rather than abandoning these roles to pursue political office. However, election data collected, organized, and analyzed for this chapter found that the past three congressional cycles have yielded more female candidates than the last, slowly increasing by a half of a percent each political cycle. This evidence suggests that modern women are refocusing their traditional identity as private influencers and reestablishing their societal roles as leaders in public life.

The second chapter of this Thesis aimed to identify the institutional barriers sustaining unequal representation, and this research found that the culture of the institution and incumbency advantage continue to discourage female candidacies. A literature review, of a variety of social science studies, found that women naturally possess leadership skills very different from men. Women tend to be collaborative communicators, whereas, men value control and corrective action. Because women were excluded from public life during the development of U.S. institutions, Congress became a representative body created by men, for men. The federal legislature now operates as a competitive environment with an elaborate system of rules, rather than evolving into an institution also dependent on maintaining healthy relationships. As a result, the U.S. Congress lacks a healthy mix of the leadership skills adopted long ago by the American

workforce, causing the institution to lag behind modern cultural precedent. This Chapter recommended that leaders of both genders foster an environment more appealing to qualified women, by embracing female leadership styles in institutional processes and challenging the narrative surrounding work/life balance.

The second chapter also investigated the role of incumbency advantage in sustained unequal representation of gender in the United States Congress. Incumbent advantages during congressional campaigns limit the likelihood that emerging female candidates will win these seats, because incumbents leverage the resources of their office as a platform for messaging and constituent engagement, benefit from name recognition, and establish lucrative fundraising avenues while elected. Subsequently, these advantages have real consequences for women because male incumbents occupy 80 percent of congressional seats as of 2017. Federal election data collected, organized, and analyzed for this Chapter suggests that state term limits reduce the impact of incumbency advantage by propelling female leaders with previously established networks into federal elections. This research concluded that states with term limits are more likely to elect women to federal office and that they are closer to reaching gender parity in the United States Congress than states without these constraints. Subsequently, this Chapter recommends state legislatures implement term limits in order to promote gender parity in the federal government.

While the first two chapters of this Thesis exhaustively highlighted the deeply rooted societal and institution barriers contributing to sustained unequal representation of gender, the final chapter investigated global methods to promote female inclusion in government and assessed their value to U.S. policymakers. Considering the United States

ranked behind 100 nations in the percentage of women serving in international parliaments as of 2017, American policymakers and scholars undoubtedly benefit from considering the global best practices that more successfully promote female representation.

Specifically, this Chapter studied the success and challenges associated with election quotas, formal commitments from political leaders, and the role of non-profit support networks in electing women. This research found that election systems throughout the world have adopted variations of quota policies in order to promote equal representation of gender and minorities, including mandated reserved seats and voluntary political party measures. However, election quotas are unlikely to achieve gender parity in the United States Congress for three reasons: (1) U.S. political parties already embrace qualified female candidates when they choose to run; (2) quota systems impede upon constitutionally protected rights; and (3) quota systems are not likely to change institutional culture or increase political ambition in qualified women. This research also found that international leaders encourage the inclusion of women in government by making formal commitments to raise public awareness and increase female engagement in political processes. If the women currently serving in Congress adopted this global best practice and formalized a collective commitment to recruit and/or support qualified female candidates, they would increase female political ambition and reduce the impacts of the institution's culture and incumbency advantage on representation. Finally, this research found that many successful methods to promote gender equality in national parliaments come from the private sector. Many female advocacy organizations influence government and the electorate from outside of the public sphere. Other organizations

more directly advocate for gender parity from within political systems in order to change national gender policies and influence party selection processes. Regardless of their approach, non-profits have proven to be support networks for qualified female candidates throughout the world. Policymakers should adopt their non-conventional methods, like public awareness campaigns and political training programs, in order to diminish the societal and institutional barriers sustaining unequal representation in Congress.

This Thesis sought to better understand the societal and institutional barriers sustaining unequal representation of gender in Congress in order to offer policymakers practical approaches to achieving parity in the United States. While this academic contribution highlighted the cultural consequences associated with inequality, it did not fully address the potential impact of parity on American society. It is difficult to conceptualize the scope of opportunities and benefits provided by gender equality in government, likely because the world has yet to witness this phenomenon in practice. With a record high of only 19.6 percent of congressional seats in 2017, female representatives have given scholars a glimpse into how a *truly* representative government might operate. There is academic consensus that female members bring alternative perspectives to policy deliberations; therefore, it is likely that parity would result in an increase of advocacy for issues historically excluded from political dialog and government action. Social scientists also agree that women possess very different leadership skills from men, which suggests the legislature would transform into an institution dependent on maintaining healthy relationships. Former Congressman William Clinger proposes that female representatives may also help to preserve the integrity of the institution, as the modern political environment “is inhabited by [members that believe]

negotiation and compromise are dirty words. The fact that women tend to be more conciliatory and prone to compromise is the strongest reason for electing women in this age of gridlock in the body.”¹⁰¹ While the potential impact of parity on society remains speculative in nature, evidence from examples of female inclusion in the public and private sectors suggest that an institution with a proportional representation of men and women will more appropriately represent the interests of the American electorate and perform its responsibilities outlined by the Constitution.

¹⁰¹ Congressman William Clinger, personal correspondence with the author, December 2017.

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