3-2022

The Partisan Gender Gap: Why Democratic Women Get Elected but Republican Women Don't (book review)

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political rhetoric found in these early newspapers, it also provides an opportunity for interested readers to compare the rhetoric "back then" with what we have today. The phrasing may have been more flowery or convoluted, but otherwise one comes away with the impression that, as Green says in his epilogue, not much has changed. Dissent, as he shows, has always been an integral aspect, both positive and negative, of the American presidency.

The Partisan Gender Gap: Why Democratic Women Get Elected but Republican Women Don't. By Lauren Elder. New York: New York University Press, 2021. 229p. $89.00 cloth, $25.00 paper.
doi:10.1017/S1537592721003406

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In *The Partisan Gender Gap*, Lauren Elder investigates why Democratic women representatives have outnumbered Republican women representatives over the last three decades. Elder pays attention to a phenomenon that has generally been ignored by the larger field, arguing that the partisan gender gap is not a random occurrence but instead an effect of structural and self-reinforcing dynamics inherent in the American political system. Using qualitative and quantitative data, she identifies how racial, ideological, and regional realignments—as well as differing partisan cultures—contribute to fewer electoral opportunities for Republican women compared to Democratic women.

The first chapter outlines the four overlapping theoretical frameworks used to explain the partisan gender gap among women in elective office: ideological realignment, regional realignment, racial realignment, and the impact of parties' distinct cultures on the recruitment of women candidates. Considering evolving party ideologies, Elder theorizes that states with more traditional cultures have fewer women in state legislatures than states with more moralistic political cultures. In a closely connected insight, Elder notes that regional realignment in the parties has reinforced ideological polarization, particularly in the South. She reasons that, for Republican women, realignment has resulted in a party that is strongest in regions most resistant to women office seekers (the South) and that is losing seats in areas more welcoming to women (the Northeast and West). Additionally, the realignment of the parties around race and the high levels of success for Democratic women of color increase the partisan gender gap. Finally, Elder notes that distinct partisan cultures likely accelerate the rise of Democratic women candidates. Whereas Democratic women face an identity-forward culture, the Republican Party's gender-neutral recruitment, disdain of identity politics, and reluctance to discuss the inherent value of electing women contribute to a culture in which Republican women candidates are less likely to be recruited or supported.

The second chapter explores the partisan gender gap within state legislatures. Elder first explores the gap's trajectory over three decades and to what degree it has coincided with the realignment of parties ideologically, racially, and geographically. She finds trends consistent with the impacts of realignment. Elder also capitalizes on the variation in the partisan gender gap at the state and regional levels, revealing suggestive trends about the importance of where Republican women run. The data suggest that as the Republican Party's foothold in the South grew, Republican women faced a more challenging electoral landscape, resulting in a problematic underrepresentation of Republican women in an area of the country where their party holds the most electoral power. Interestingly, Elder suggests that, as Democratic women have been able to make striking gains in the Northeast, Midwest, and South, geography is no longer an obstacle for Democratic women candidates. Elder attributes this difference in geographic importance to conservative attitudes about women's place in southern culture being concentrated among Republicans (and thus only constraining Republican women), more effective recruitment for Democratic women, and the strong performance of Democratic women of color. Elder also uses multivariate analysis to explore the factors that help or hinder the representation of Republican women, finding more support for the realignment frame. Whereas conservative states and strong parties are associated with fewer Republican women, women's presence in the eligibility pool, multimember districts, and increased women in partisan leadership positions are related only to increased numbers of Democratic women.

The third chapter establishes support for the realignment theories at the federal level. As with the state-level results, Elder finds that regional realignment negatively affects Republican women at the federal level because of the lack of Republican seats in "women-friendly" regions and the increase of Republican Party power in the South. She explores racial realignment using data on the racial/ethnic and gender background of congressional representatives over time, finding a comparatively stronger electoral performance of women of color than white women. To assess ideological realignment, Elder analyzes the educational, occupational, and political backgrounds of women members of the 116th Congress. This analysis suggests that Republican women have a greater reliance on state legislative experience as their path to power. This reliance is potentially unsustainable because of the shrinking number of Republican women in state legislatures, suggesting a widening partisan gender gap.

The fourth chapter explores the diverse party cultures and their impact on the recruitment of women candidates. Elder uses a wealth of descriptive data from 21 interviews with members of party organizations, women candidates and officeholders, and members of partisan groups

committed to recruiting women candidates, along with additional interviews of members of a nonpartisan group committed to political parity and a range of documents from parties and affiliated groups. This qualitative data analysis suggests that the Democratic Party's open and identity-conscious culture allows those who desire increased women's representation to enter the party structure, attain leadership roles, influence recruitment, and partner with groups committed to supporting women candidates; these actions are seen as a normal part of the party system, rather than acts of disloyalty. Conversely, the Republican Party's hierarchical structure, distance from "identity politics," and internal disagreement about why women's representation is important undermine the party's ability to recruit Republican women or partner efficiently with outside groups committed to increasing women's representation.

This book is compelling and encourages additional questions about the partisan gender gap. With added hindsight, we can now consider Elder's contribution in light of the 2020 election, where Republican women's House candidacies increased 89% from 2018 (Kelly Dittmar, "What You Need to Know about the Record Numbers of Women Candidates in 2020," *Center for American Women in Politics*, 2020). In concluding the book, Elder contemplates the potential rise of Republican women candidates in 2020, arguing that the Republican Party is not well positioned to close the partisan gender gap. Readers are left to question whether 2020 is an anomaly in an otherwise eventual decline of Republican women candidates, or if this year is suggestive of a cultural shift pushed by women's groups outside the party. This rise does not invalidate Elder's core argument, because the partisan gender gap persists despite gains made by Republican women candidates. However, it may complicate readers' understanding of this text. Together, the increase in the number of Republican women candidates and the unchanging structural impacts of realignment suggest that Republican women must overcome greater obstacles to increase their numbers. Additionally, scholars should consider the potentially undervalued role of women's groups in supporting women candidates. More research into these Republican women's groups and their effectiveness would be beneficial to clarify whether the candidate recruitment process for Republican women is changing.

This text serves as a valuable model for how to frame issues concerning women in politics. As Elder argues, scholars should understand the women candidate pipeline as a "tale of two parties," rather than a homogeneous group. Although ideological, geographic, and racial realignments are studied for their seismic impact on American politics, their connection to the partisan gender gap has not heretofore been fully articulated. Elder provides a more complete explanation of the partisan gender gap than has been previously studied and, through this contribution, moves forward the fields of women in politics and American politics.

Averting Catastrophe: Decision Theory for COVID-19, Climate Change, and Potential Disasters of All Kinds.
By Cass R. Sunstein. New York: NYU Press, 2021. 176p. $19.95 cloth.
doi:10.1017/S1537592721002413

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In *Averting Catastrophe*, Cass Sunstein continues his lengthy body of work on decision theory and risk management in public policy. He focuses in this book on regulatory decisions under "Knightian uncertainty," where the probabilities of different outcomes are truly unknown. Under these conditions of uncertainty, Sunstein endorses use of the "maximin" principle, which recommends choosing the option with the "best" minimum outcome, thus avoiding the greatest risk. Specifically, he suggests use of the maximin principle under the following limited conditions: (1) near-total uncertainty about the probability of different outcomes, (2) relatively low costs for preventing the worst-case outcome, and (3) relatively high social costs of the worst-case outcome. By focusing on regulatory choices under such conditions of deep uncertainty, the book makes a helpful contribution to the burgeoning debate over regulatory policy regarding environmental, public health, and other complex risks. At the same time, the book is less effective in applying some of its abstract ideas to concrete examples such as climate change or COVID-19, despite its subtitle. Nevertheless, this is a carefully argued and concise treatment of important issues in risk management policy, one that would be useful for those studying or teaching risk management policy and decision making under conditions of uncertainty.

The book starts by discussing the difference between conditions of "risk," where we know the probabilities of different outcomes of our decision, and conditions of "uncertainty," where we do not know those probabilities. Sunstein makes a convincing argument about the existence of situations where probabilities of different outcomes are truly unknown and their applicability to some important if "unusual" policy dilemmas (p. 80). This defense of uncertainty as an important condition for regulatory decisions is a welcome foray into an area that would benefit from more attention as governments face ever more complex and unpredictable threats.

Sunstein outlines the basic idea of the maximin principle through a set of hypotheticals, including cases where the rule seems consistent with our intuition and others where it does not. For example, Sunstein describes how the maximin rule conflicts with most people's intuition by recommending we choose a "50% chance of gaining $50 and a 50% chance of losing $50" over "a 99.9% chance of gaining $10,000 and a 0.1% chance of losing $60" (p. 28). Based on these kinds of stylized dilemmas, Sunstein makes his basic case for a regulatory policy that tries to maximize