



Erica
Browning

The Political Glass Cliff:

Potential Causes of Female Underrepresentation
in the U.S. House of Representatives



“We’re half the people,
we should be half the
Congress.”

Jeannette Pickering-Rankin



+ Leadership Stereotypes



- This Crisis – Think Female (Ryan, Haslam, Hersby & Bongiorno 2011)
 - Modification of Think Manager – Think Male
- The “Women are Wonderful” Effect (Eagly & Mladinic 1994)
- Stereotype related hindrances are multiplied within ethnic minority women (Harris-Perry 2011) (Bui 2013)

+ The Glass Cliff

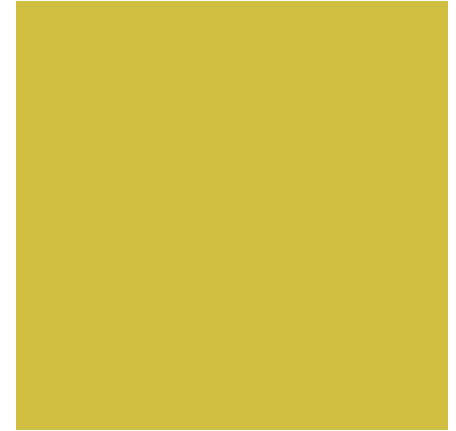


- In times of crisis female leadership is preferred by constituents (Burckmüller & Branscombe 2010)
 - Also applied to male's with traditionally female traits
- Ryan, Haslam, & Kulich (2010, 2014)
 - UK parliamentary elections
 - Winnability's effect on electoral success was significant
 - Applies to minority groups and women



Females in U.S. Political Parties

- Direct primaries and party effect (Moncreif, Squire & Jewell 2001)
- Voter self identification, and historical female success (Sanbonmatsu 2006)
- Democrat's female candidate pool 3x that of Republican's (Crowder-Meyer & Lauderdale 2014)
- Gender Quotas



Top: Hillary Rodham Clinton
Bottom: Shirley Chisholm
Right: Nancy Pelosi

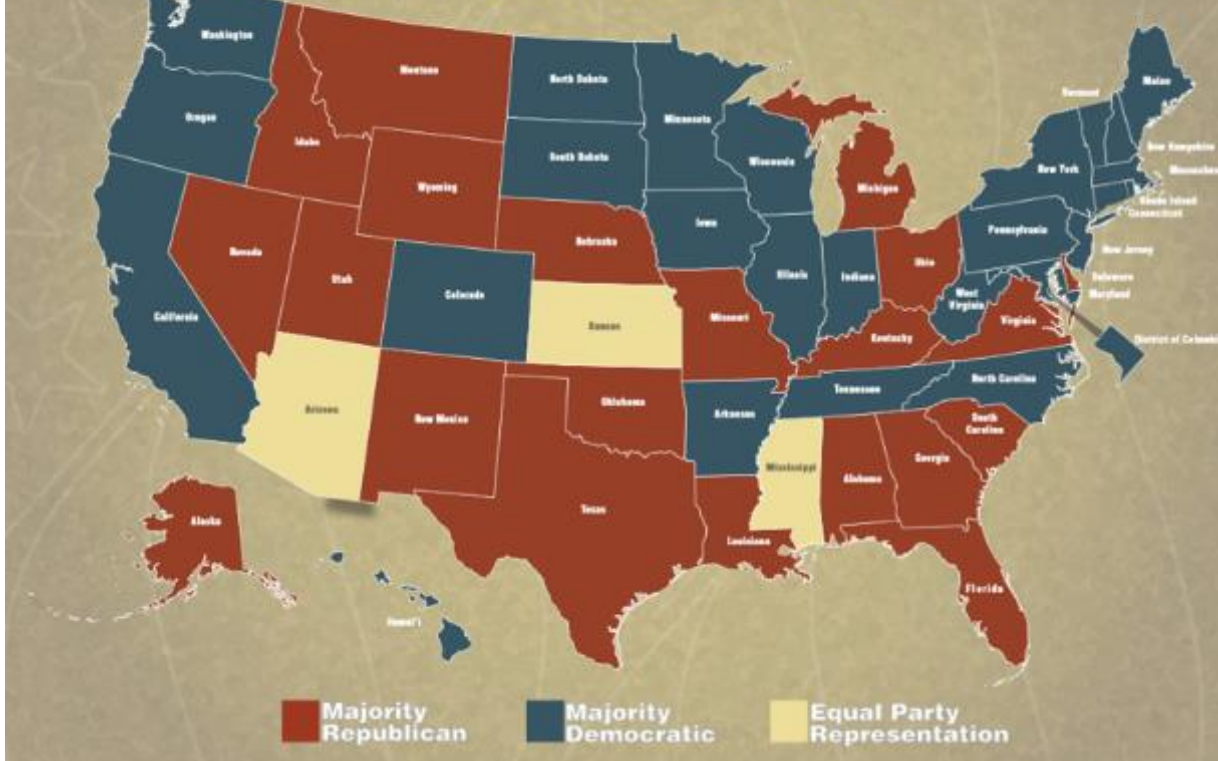


+ Present Study



- Women in the Conservative Party are more likely to run in “unwinnable” seats (Ryan, Haslam & Kulich 2010)
 - Hypothesis 1 – Winnability would be a significant factor in the lower electoral success of Republican women, compared to Democratic women
 - Hypothesis 2 - Winnability would be a significant factor in the lower electoral success of Republican women, compared to Republican men
- Election results from the US House of Representatives gathered for 2006, 2008, & 2010
- First academic study to show the existence of the glass cliff in modern US politics

U.S. House Delegations after the 2006 General Election



+ **Democrats: 233 seats**

Republicans: 202 seats



+ Democrats: 257 seats (gained 21)

Republicans: 178 seats



+ **Republicans: 242 seats (gained 63)**

Democrats: 193

+ Design and Procedures



- Federal Election Commission Reports and Party Rosters
- (1) constituency; (2) candidate name; (3) number of votes won; (4) electoral success (percentage of votes won); (5) candidate gender; (6) party affiliation; (7) incumbency; (8) relative winnability of the seat for each candidate.
- 1,602 candidates out of a possible 1,740 Republican and Democratic nominees were included
 - 273 candidates were female, and 1329 were male.
 - 803 candidates were Republicans and 799 were Democrats.

+ Analytic Strategy



- Variables
 - Incumbency (yes, no) was controlled for in all tests
 - Winnability and Electoral Success were continuous variables
 - Dummy variables sorted data into mutually exclusive categories for analysis
 - Gender and party affiliation were both dichotomous variables coded -1 and 1

- Used Between-Groups Analysis of Covariance (ANOVA)
 - Test 1: DV – Winnability, IV – Party, Gender, and Gender x Party
 - Test 2: DV – Electoral Success, IV – Party, Gender, Gender x Party
 - Test 3: DV – Electoral Success, IV – Party, Gender, Gender x Party, Controlling for Winnability

- Effects were dissected into
 - Gender on Republicans
 - Gender on Democrats
 - Party on males
 - Party on females

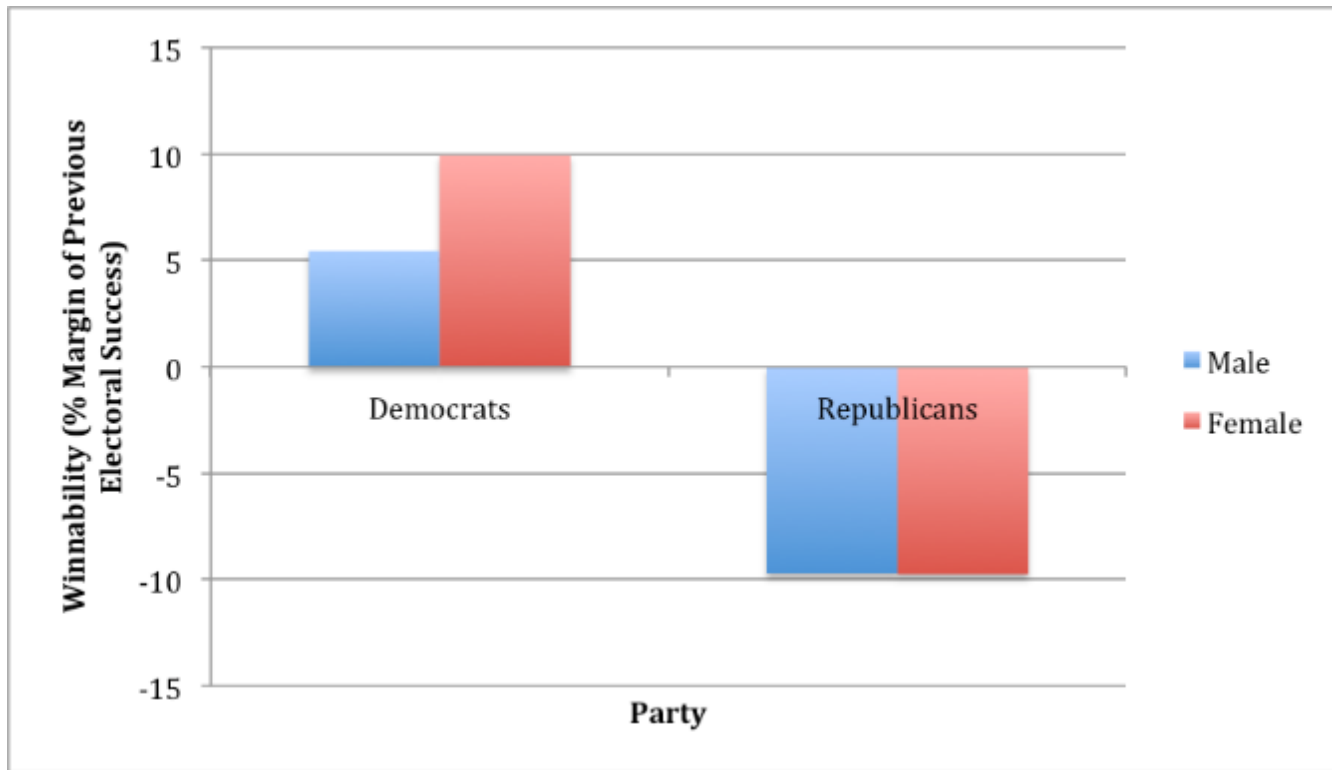
+ Results



- Test 1: Winnability
 - Significant effect of party on winnability, $p < .0001$
 - No significant effect of gender on winnability, $p = .36$
 - No significant effect of the interaction of Gender x Party on winnability, $p = .35$

- Test 2: Electoral Success
 - Significant effect of party on electoral success, $p = .007$
 - No significant effect of gender on electoral success, $p = .49$
 - Significant effect of the interaction of Gender x Party on electoral success, $p = .001$

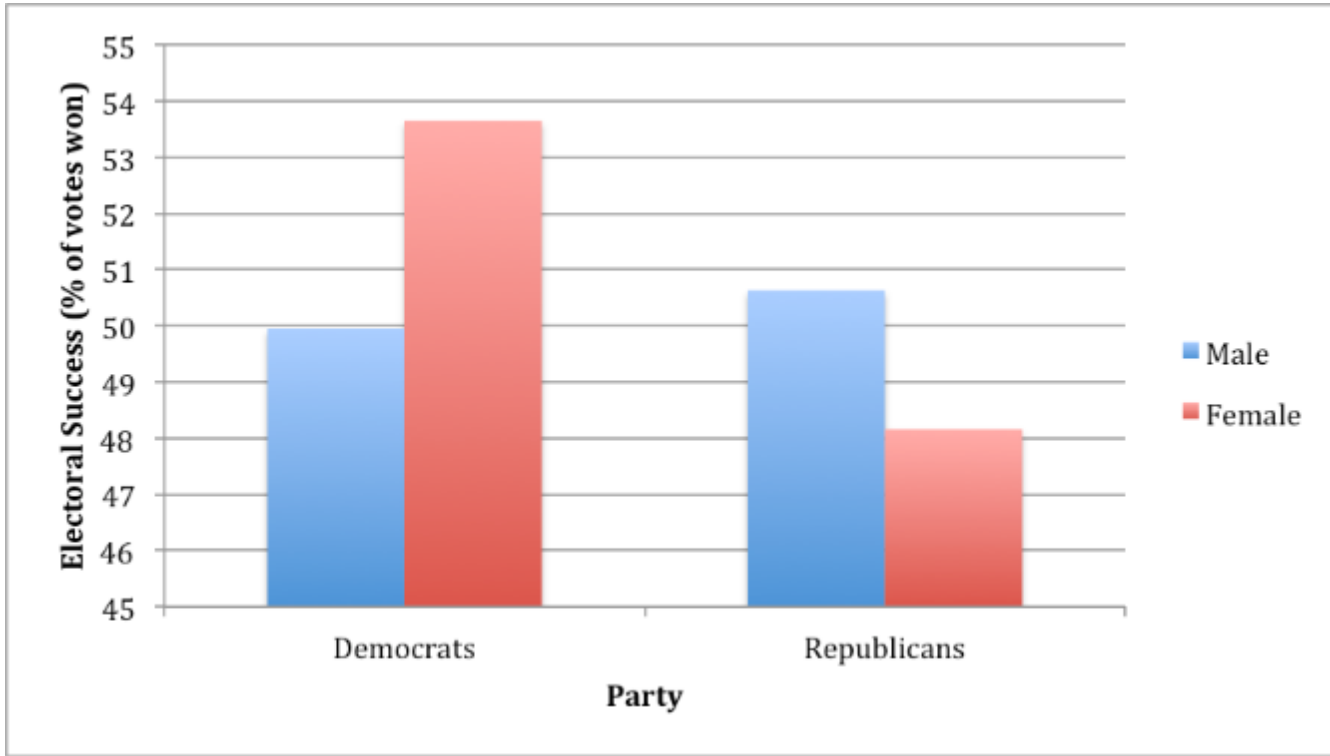
- Test 3: Electoral Success Controlling for Winnability
 - Significant effect of winnability on electoral success, $p < .0001$
 - No significant effect of party on electoral success, $p = .42$
 - No significant effect of gender on electoral success, $p = .77$ (suggests partial mediation)
 - Significant effect of the interaction of Gender x Party on electoral success, $p = .001$



+ Winnability

Male Democrats = 5.45%, Female Democrats = 9.93%

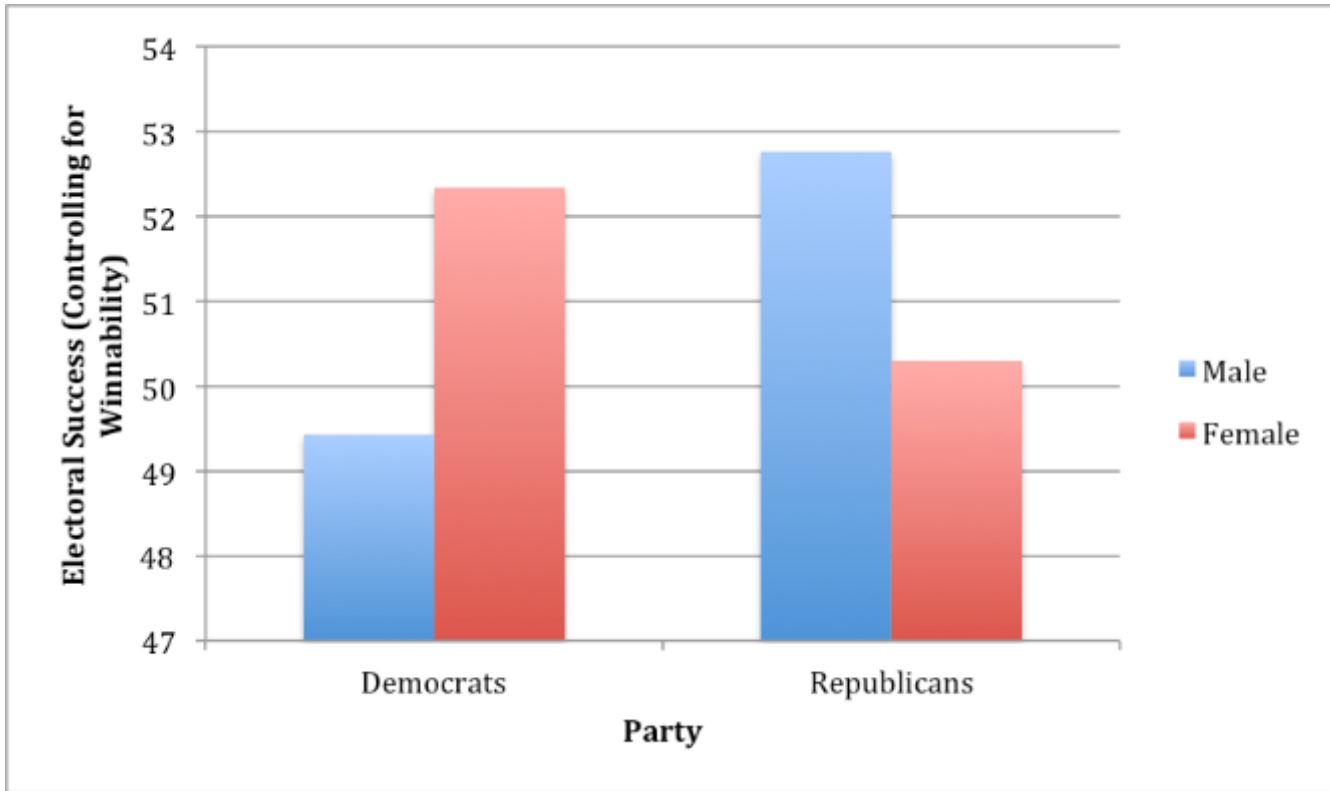
Male Republicans = -9.7%, Female Republicans = -9.74%



+ Electoral Success

Male Democrats = 49.95%, Female Democrats = 53.64%

Male Republicans = 50.63%, Female Republicans = 48.16%



+ Electoral Success Controlling for Winnability

Male Democrats = 49.43%, Female Democrats = 52.34%

Male Republicans = 52.76%, Female Republicans = 50.3%

+ Results Cont.



■ Electoral Success

- Party for Men, no significant effect, $p=.34$
- Party for Women, significant effect, $p=.001$
- Gender for Republicans, no significant effect, $p=.083$
- Gender for Democrats, significant effect, $p=.001$

■ Electoral Success Controlling for Winnability

- Party for Men, significant effect, $p<.001$
- Party for Women, no significant effect, $p=.16$
- Gender for Republicans, significant effect, $p<.05$ (.049613)
- Gender for Democrats, significant effect, $p=.002$

+ Discussion and Conclusion

- In line with Hypothesis 1, that a glass cliff does exist for Republican women compared to their female counterparts
- Disproved Hypothesis 2, gender was a larger contributing factor to the difference in electoral success, than winnability when comparing male and female republicans
- Two sided issue (Ryan et. al. 2016)

+ Future Research



- Study time frame where congressional majority moved from Republicans to Democrats
- Develop method to overcome census issue
- Minority status



References



Bruckmüller, Susanne and Nyla R. Branscombe. "The Glass Cliff: When and Why Women are Selected as Leaders in Crisis Contexts." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 49, no. 3 (September 2010): 433-51.

Bui, Tonia. "Shaping the Mainstream as an Asian American Woman: Politics within Politics." *Asian American Policy Review* 24 (January 2013): 24-30.

Crowder-Meyer, Melody, and Benjamin E. Lauderdale. "A Partisan Gap in the Supply of Female Potential Candidates in the United States." *Research & Politics* 1, no. 1 (2014): 1-7.

Eagly, Alice H. and Antonio Mladinic. "Are People Prejudiced Against Women? Some Answers from Research on Attitudes, Gender Stereotypes, and Judgment of Competence." In W. Stroebe & M. Hewstone (Eds.), *European Review of Social Psychology* 5 (1994): 1-35. New York, NY: Wiley.

Harris-Perry, Melissa V. *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

Kulich, Clara, Michelle K. Ryan, and S. Alexander Haslam. "The Political Glass Cliff: Understanding How Seat Selection Contributes to the Underperformance of Ethnic Minority Candidates." *Political Research Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (March 2014): 84-95.

Moncrief, Gary F., Peverill Squire, and Malcolm E. Jewell. *Who Runs for the Legislature?* Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2001.

Ryan, Michelle K., S. Alexander Haslam, and Clara Kulich. "Politics and the Glass Cliff: Evidence That Women are Preferentially Selected to Contest Hard-to-Win Seats." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (March 2010): 56-64.

Ryan, Michelle K., S. Alexander Haslam, Metter D. Hersby, and Bongiorno, R. "Think Crisis-Think Female: Glass Cliffs and Contextual Variation in the Think Manager-Think Male Stereotype." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 96, no. 3 (May 2011): 470-84.

Sanbonmatsu, Kira, and Inc ebrary. *Where women run: Gender and Party in the American States*. Ann Arbor (2006; 2010): University of Michigan Press.