Women from the Establishment versus the "Squad": Female Political Representational Styles In the U.S Congress

Las mujeres del Establishment vs el Squad: estilos de representación política femenina en el Congreso de Estados Unidos

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Abstract

In 2019, a record number of women took their seats in the U.S. Congress. In addition to the increase in female participation, the members also present a wider ethnic, racial, cultural, and class diversity. In this political universe, two highly contrasting profiles stand out: on the one hand, the women of the Establishment, led by Nancy Pelosi; on the other, the challenging "Squad," headed by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. This article contrasts both styles of political representation based on an analysis of social networks, press coverage, and legislative performance. The main result of this research is that no differences exist between the "Squad" and the women of the Establishment in terms of patterns of introducing bills, voting, and fundraising. The main divergences reside in their public discourse, the ideological platform they subscribe to, and their leadership styles.
Key words: Congress, women, representation, legislative branch, United States

Resumen

En 2019 un récord histórico de mujeres conformó el Congreso estadunidense. Además del incremento de la participación femenina, hay una mayor diversidad étnica, racial, cultural y de clase entre estas congresistas. En este universo político resaltan dos perfiles altamente contrastantes: por un lado, las mujeres del *Establishment* lideradas por Nancy Pelosi; por otro, el desafiante *Squad* encabezado por Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. A partir de un análisis de redes sociales, de la prensa y del desempeño legislativo, en esta investigación se contrastan ambos estilos de representación política. El resultado principal de esta investigación es que en patrones de presentación de iniciativas de ley, votación y fuentes de financiamiento no hay diferencias entre el *Squad* y las mujeres del *Establishment*. Las principales divergencias son en su discurso público, en la plataforma ideológica a la que se adscriben y en el estilo de liderazgo que ejercen.
Palabras clave: congreso, mujeres, representación, Poder Legislativo, Estados Unidos.

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INTRODUCTION

According to statistical estimates, the U.S. population is composed of slightly more women (50.8 percent) than men (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). However, in the U.S. Congress, the main political institution with a representational make-up, women are currently underrepresented. In the 2018 midterm elections, a historic number of women were elected to it, but that still means that in the 116th Congress, inaugurated in 2019, only 127 women, 23.7 percent of the total 535 members, were seated. In addition, a woman, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, chairs one of the two Houses, and another 16 women hold leadership party and committee positions.

The main goal of this article is to analyze the nature of women's political representation in the U.S. Congress in the current context, plagued with contradictions. On the one hand, we find social mobilizations such as #Me Too, #Time's Up, and the Women's March, which have invigorated women's political agendas within and outside political institutions. On the other hand, women are facing multiple attacks, even from the current president and other representatives. In addition, setbacks in reproductive rights, an unresolved wage gap, and other gendered topics remain latent in U.S. politics.

The central argument of this research is based on the fact that U.S. political institutions were designed by white, Anglo-Saxon, elite men who imprinted their vision on political structures and rules in an era when women were voiceless in politics. In this context, women enter politics through two contrasting channels: political mainstreaming and confrontation. The former is exemplified by a senior group seeking leadership by consensus and following the traditional political rules —these are the women from the Establishment). The latter case consists of a new generation of young women from diverse ethnic and cultural contexts, who exercise more contentious politics —"the Squad," as they have called themselves in social media. Their contrasting styles of political representation will make it difficult to forge the necessary alliances and agreements for advancing women's political agendas.

The design for this research is based on analyzing the legislative performance of both groups, taking as reference the most representative cases:

	Table 1 PROFILES OF CONGRESSWOMEN SUBJECT TO STUDY	
	Representative	**Leadership position**
Senior	Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)	Speaker of the House
	Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA)	Vice Chair, Democratic Caucus
	Rep. Janice Shakowsky (D-IL)	Senior Democratic Chief Deputy Whip
	Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY)	Chair, Appropriations Committee
Freshmen	Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY)	None/ Regular Member
	Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN)	None/ Regular Member
	Rep. Ayana Pressley (D-MA)	None/ Regular Member
	Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI)	None/ Regular Member
Source: Developed by the author.		

Case selection is based on the House of Representatives because this is the most dynamic house. The House of Representatives has shorter terms and change is reflected sooner due to the continuous elections. The House was projected to represent citizen constituencies directly; for that reason, it is more influenced by society. In the 116th Congress, a total of 108 Democratic congresswomen (89 in the House) and 23 Republicans (13 in the House) serve.

I focus on the Democratic Party because, in the 2018 midterm elections, they won the House majority. In addition, the 2018 election polls reported that 56 percent of women describe themselves as Democrats (Doherty, Kiley, and O'Hea, 2018). Besides the marginal participation of female candidates in the Republican Party, only 37 percent of women are reported as Republicans. Moreover, Republican congresswomen leaders are scarce: I found only the House Republican Conference Chair, Liz Cheney (R-WY), who holds the seat and consequently, enjoys the leadership inherited from her father, former Vice President Dick Cheney (2001-2009).

Data collection consisted of qualitative research into newspapers and social media to document the congresswomen's public discourse. Subsequently, I registered the bills they sponsored and the roll call votes in Congress during the 2019 term. Finally, I analyzed fundraising patterns in 2019 for the upcoming 2020 elections. I used all of the aforementioned information to explain whether the differences between the two profiles are merely discursive, or if the legislative performance between the congresswomen of the Establishment and the progressives actually varied. To conclude, I highlight a balance sheet of how these dynamics influence the broader context of women's policy in the United States.

A Brief History of the Political Incursion of U.S. Women

Understanding the political struggles for women's rights in the United States through their so-called four waves is a useful analytical tool for summarizing all the diverse movements convergent across generations. A continuum exists between civil rights and political movements of women within and outside the margins of institutional politics. Each of the four waves contains episodes of protests and political action to expand the role of women in U.S. politics.

The nineteenth amendment to the United States Constitution established in 1920 that "The right to the United States citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex" and that political institutions are responsible for guaranteeing the exercise of this right. This amendment would try to end by decree centuries of denial of rights because of sex. This legal victory was achieved due to a set of dynamics of social protest, political activism inside Congress, and court battles carried out by organizations of the first wave of women's political activism in the United States.

In July 1848, a group of women led by Elizabeth Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucretia Mott organized the first women's rights convention in history in Seneca Falls, New York (Wellman, 2004). While this episode is often taken as the departing point of formal activism, women's struggles in the United States have been broader and wider. Tetrault explains:

> One could anchor the beginning of the women's rights movement in the United States in many events…: the Grimké sisters' practical and theoretical defenses of women as public actors in the 1830s. . .; the Lower Mill textile operatives and their 1834 and 1836 strikes for fair treatment and decent wages. . . ; six women in upstate New York who, in 1846… petitioned their state constitutional convention for the first time for the right to vote. (2014: 5)

Missing from the list is the activism of Alice Stokes Paul, the founder of the National Woman's Party, author of the failed "Equal Rights Amendment," and leader of the suffragists' protests in the White House during the Wilson presidency. Furthermore, in 1916, Jeannette Rankin became the first woman to be elected to the House of Representatives by the state of Montana. It was not until 1932 that Hattie Caraway became the first female senator representing the state of Arkansas by replacing her deceased husband.

The first wave of women's civil and political rights movements, which in the 1920s conquered the right to vote, also achieved other institutional changes incorpo-

rating women into the national public sphere. For example, in 1920, the Women's Bureau was created within the Department of Labor; this was the first public office created exclusively for women in the U.S. government.

The second wave took place in the 1960s, characterized by the diversification of women's rights movements. Liberal feminism that expected to improve the status of women through political and legal reforms was no longer the exclusive vehicle for mobilization (Palmer and Simon, 2006). Within this wave, black feminism, Chicano feminism, radical feminism, and other manifestations more oriented to social change and activism than to politics took on strength (Hurtado, 1996). In this generation, liberal feminism achieved several victories in the courts and Congress. For example, in 1964, labor discrimination on account of sex was banned, and in 1972, the Equal Rights Amendment for Women was passed.

Within the second wave, numerous organizations arose intending to empower women in exercising their granted rights. In 1966, organizer Betty Friedman founded the National Organization for Women (now), still the largest association for women's rights today. The increase of women in political positions sparked the emergence of caucuses and political action committees in support of female political careers. In 1971, Democratic Congresswoman Bella Abzug and Republican Representative Virginia Allen founded the National Women's Political Caucus.

In 1974, the Women's Campaign Fund was founded to offer technical support, networks, and resources for women in campaigns. For its part, the wish List (the Women in Senate and House List) supported Republican women candidates. Another important organization is the emily ("Early Money Is Like Yeast") List, which, before the 1986 elections, raised funds to support female Democratic candidates in the primaries (Kelber, 1994). Until now, it is the richest and most influential political action committee supporting women.

In the 1990s, the so-called third wave of activism for the struggle for women's political rights in the United States began. The main objectives were to place more women in higher positions of political power and to exercise micro politics of gender equality that included denouncing labor discrimination and sexual violence. In 1992, women's efforts to send more female representatives to Congress succeeded, and a historical record was reached; that is why it is known as "the year of women" (Carroll and Fox, 2018; Palmer and Simon, 2006).

In the context of the third wave, now President Patricia Ireland, Feminist Majority Foundation Director Eleanor Smeal, and Dolores Huerta, leader of the National Farmworkers Association, founded together the 21ST Century Party intending to achieve gender parity in Congress and public office in 2001. The aforementioned political action committees were consolidated at this stage. They were an important stake in

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the political trajectories of many women in the House and Senate; this later helped congresswomen to reach leadership positions inside Congress (Day and Hadley, 2001).

The fourth wave of the women's rights movement in the United States is currently underway. There is a continuity with the objectives of previous generations in favor of professional empowerment (more women leading politics, science, business, among other areas), equal pay, and an absolute rejection of sexual violence. While this new wave of the movement has expressed itself mainly through mass demonstrations, in this continuum of women's activism and politics, other important dynamics also exist within institutional policy; these are the main object of this study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework guiding this research has two core arguments as its starting point. First is the conceptual distinction between women's policy and women's politics; second, theoretical postulates about the principal challenges that congresswomen face inside congressional politics, such as the gendered institutions, glass ceilings, and political mainstreaming.

The policy-making process, the nature of agencies and courts, as well as the structure of congressional committees are arenas of convergence for diverse social forces. However, they are not empty structures, but sets of political values, conventions, operative principles, and rules endowed by their founding fathers and their current members. The values, conventions, beliefs, and rules have been accumulated across history and forge the character of the institutions. The idea of gendered institutions refers to the fact that gender is present in processes, practices, representations, ideologies, and the distribution of power in various sectors of public life (Kenney, 1996). It should be noted that gender is a culturally created category, based on expectations about behavior, reactions, attributes, and ways of doing things (Carroll and Fox, 2018). U.S. government structure is mostly composed of gendered institutions, proto-characteristics of masculinity that were imprinted by its founding fathers, and that determine the nature of its rules and political conventions.

Congress is the organization in which the influence of masculinity has become most visible. Duerst (2002) explains that its hierarchical structure, its individualism caused by the need to seek reelection, its huge normative approach (numerous written and unwritten rules), the nature of leadership that conditions strategic coalitions based on interests and not on ideology, are, on the whole, masculine characteristics of Congress that affect and even hinder the political participation of the women who have gradually joined the institution. However, political institutions produce,

reproduce, and can also subvert their gender. It means that congresswomen have transformative capacity in the organization. Still, they must first face multiple dynamics that hinder them and provide an advantage to those who catalyze political change in their favor.

Women are a political force in the United States, but they are not a unified political force; instead, they are a heterogeneous and highly disperse subgroup for which politicians contend (Palley, 2007). Hill and Chappell suggest, "women have many interests in common, but also many in conflict" (2006: 1). Therefore, women's policy refers to topics that most disproportionally affect women's lives (Barnello and Bratton, 2007).

Vickers explains that "'women's politics' encompassed varied grounds activists used in asserting claims, demanding policies, resources, and change in social and political institutions in the interests of women" (2006: 5). To succeed in national politics, women must first articulate a collective voice, which is formed issue by issue, although their organizations and movements facilitate it. Subsequently, they must learn how to insert their claims and interests in decision-making processes within institutional politics; this, in turn, requires the development of a network of political allies that listen to them and represent them.

Mansbrige (1999) suggests that when there has been a history of institutional discrimination and electoral barriers that have allowed a dominant group to systematically marginalize the demands of minority groups, descriptive representation (mirror representation) is seen as the most viable path to greater political influence. Accordingly, descriptive representation will help crystallize a political agenda for the group and catalyst organization to incorporate those issues in institutional politics.

Increasing the number of congresswomen not only serves for passing laws in their favor or occupying leadership positions, but it also changes the nature of the organization, endowing its conventions and mechanisms with plurality. In other words, the demography of an institution affects its political culture; this way, it influences society as a whole. The main problem is that in addition to gendered institutions as contextual structures, the political careers of congresswoman also face "the glass-ceiling barriers."

The "glass ceiling" metaphor has been used since the 1980s to explain the web of barriers, at first glance invisible because they are based on prejudices and attitudes, that women face in their professional life to accede to positions of power. Examples are the wage gap, the underestimation of their leadership abilities and decision-making skills (cognitive biases), and the misconception that women are out of place at work because they are intended for domestic and care tasks (social biases). All these conditions discourage and restrain women with high political aspirations.

Paradoxically, numerous studies (Connell, 2006; Lawless, 2004; Palmer and Simon, 2006) have found that while women have less motivation or less opportunity to run for public office, once they enter into the race, they have the same chances of winning as male candidates. In a study about the election of congresswomen, Fox (2018) found that female candidates have similar voting rates and fundraising patterns to those of their male counterparts in similar circumstances. However, one of the main beams in the glass ceiling holding female candidates back from Congress are the incumbents seeking reelection.

Although men and women with similar ages, experience, ideologies, and platforms have the same opportunities and challenges *vis-à-vis* the incumbents (Griffin, Newman, and Wolbrecht, 2012), the fact that there are currently more male incumbents and that they are more likely to win the election causes a slow incorporation of female representatives in each new legislature. Kelber (1994) argues that women generally occupy a seat in Congress after winning very close elections against a powerful incumbent.

According to the 2018 midterm electoral polls, 378 congresspersons were seeking reelection and only 33 of them lost their seats. A total of fourteen women defeated male incumbents while only four male candidates defeated female incumbents. According to Palmer and Simon (2006), the ideal setting for a woman to win a close election against an incumbent is an ethnically diverse district that is not mostly conservative, is primarily urban, and has constituents with higher education levels.

Incumbents' advantages are clear. They have more visibility, political experience, and available resources to secure reelection. Conversely, women's electoral campaigns, especially of those from ethnic, religious, racial, and sexual minorities, are often helped by grassroots organizations, door-to-door canvassing by volunteers, fundraising events, and ambitious progressive agendas as their main political tools.

Once elected, "women inside institutions weave their pathway between identification and difference, their status as 'outsider inside' creates differences between them and other institutional actors" (Roth, 2006: 158). Congresswomen must cope with mechanisms of marginalization and erosion after the election. There are important differences in the way freshmen congresswomen legislate compared to their male counterparts and to senior congresswomen who have previously paved their way inside the institution.

Institutions put stability before progressive political change. Exogenous and endogenous forces block political access to those seeking abrupt change. Roth explains that "the dilemma for women within institutions dominated by men is that while their exercise is essential to improve the lives of women, within these institutional arrangements, gender inequality and specific obstacles must be faced by them"

(2006: 158). Women in politics can be perceived as marginalized or included, but without a doubt, their gender agenda is in constant dispute.

Most of the literature on women in the U.S. Congress has been based on study-ing the differences in the political behavior of male and female representatives (Grif-fin, Newman, and Wolbrecht; 2012; Hill, 2006; Swers, 2005). According to these studies, the tendency of female representatives in their legislative performance is po-litical mainstreaming, which consists of a double dynamic when dealing with issues. The first phase involves loading topics with a gender perspective in their support networks. The second phase is to take away the gender perspective to make universal demands, create intersectional alliances, and convince the floor to vote for their bills.

Hawkesworth (2003) explains that several tactics are used by the mainstream in Congress to restrain others, such as silencing them, stereotyping, making them in-visible, exclusion, marginalization, defying epistemic authority, and consciously elim-inating legislative issues. These strategies assure congressmen a sort of "with them, but not part of us." Hurtado (1996) suggests that women from racial minorities who act following the agenda based on which they were chosen are confronted with a sit-uation in which "men and women in positions of power pretend not to understand political suggestions or substantive arguments, and they ask them for more argu-ments or more elaboration" (Hurtado, 1996: 135). In this way, congresswomen have to dedicate more time and extra energy to educating other legislators, and mainstream politicians delay political change.

However, "women are not uniformly destined to focus on 'women's affairs,' and men are not uniformly disinterested in these matters" (Barnello and Bratton, 2007: 452). After an exhaustive study on the nature of political representation, some authors (Griffin, Newman, and Wolbrecht, 2012) insist that there are no differences in the dyadic representation among female constituents, regardless of whether the representative is male or female. The fundamental difference involves the treatment of sensitive issues for women on which male and female representatives may have more gender-determined positions.

Swers (2005) found that when members of Congress from minority back-grounds belong to the majority party, they perceive positively partisan control of the political agenda, which increases their opportunities to pass the bills they sponsor. In this context, when congresswomen are part of the congressional majority, they increase their activism in favor of women's policies. Conversely, when congress-women belong to a congressional minority, their overall political activity decreases.

According to studies conducted by Swers (1998, 2005), ideology is the main ele-ment for predicting congresswomen's voting patterns, although female solidarity plays an important role. That is, women tend to vote mostly in favor of bills intro-

duced by women, especially when they deal with topics that directly affect women such as healthcare, abortion and planned parenthood, crime prevention, and social security. This dynamic is particularly interesting in the case of Republican representatives, whose party does not usually vote in favor of these issues of interest for women.

Contemporary Political Agendas
And Public Attitudes of U.S. Women

According to McBride and Parry (2011), the objective of examining the political demands of U.S. women is ambitious, especially given the diversity of U.S. society and the complexity of the federal system. Women's rights are affected by the political game and public policy. Still, above all, they are affected by their abilities to use the game in their favor, as well as to navigate varied political scenarios. Today's political priorities of U.S. women, then, respond to multiple variables before gender.

In 2018, 86.3 million women were eligible to vote, and 66.4 million were registered (Center for American Women and Politics, 2018). Besides higher registration rates than men, women have higher voter turnout rates (see Table 2).

Table 2 THE GENDER GAP IN TURNOUT			
Year	Women's Turnout %	Men's Turnout %	Gender Gap
2014	43	40.8	+2.2
2016	63.3	59.3	+4
2018	55	51.8	+3.2
Source: Developed by the author with data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2019).			

Given these data, it is paradoxical that women are still underrepresented in every political office in the United States.

Day and Hadley (2001) suggest three sets of variables to understand women's political preferences. The first is related to symbolic politics and includes issues around political ideology and partisanship. The second variable is the degree of trust that government will solve women's main social demands and whether they favor a large government with a broad welfare system or not. Finally, there are individual and contextual accounts related to social status (class, race, ethnicity, religion, and even the gender or sexual minority identified with).

In 2018, polls found that 56 percent of women described themselves as Democrats, and 37 percent as Republicans (Carroll and Fox, 2018). In addition, Latino, African-American, and Asian minorities are mostly Democrats. Accordingly, the intersection between female gender and racial minority is a predictor of Democratic partisanship. Similarly, another predictor is the intersection of female gender and higher levels of education. Conversely, Thomsen (2015) explains that the systematic exclusion of women, higher levels of conservativism, and polarizing positions on women's agenda issues result in fewer women identifying with the Republican Party.

The volatile U.S. political agenda presents a specificity: almost no topic is new in the public sphere. On every topic, positions, decrees, and laws already exist at different levels of the political communities (McBride and Parry, 2011). The women who venture into legislative politics must structure their agendas based on those foundations. Congresswomen must learn to figure out support networks, opposition sources, and their possibilities in order for their initiatives related to women's policy to be successful, and so on to build their political future.

On average, women voters tend to be more liberal than men in the United States (Griffin, Norman, and Wolbrecht, 2012) explains that while women support issues related to peacekeeping, education, and welfare, men are more concerned about the economy, taxes, and crime. She (2006) also explains that male voters are politically more conservative about homosexuality, patriotism, traditional values, and foreign military adventures. By contrast, female voters favor environmental policies, the ethics of care, opposition to war, and international solidarity policies.

The Gender Watch (Center for American Women and Politics, 2018) found that certain topics mobilize female voters more than male voters. Women's priorities were healthcare, immigration, and education. Men, meanwhile, included terrorism and gun control as priorities. In addition to a differentiated order in their political priorities, the positions and content are different for the female and male electorates.

Women have increased their participation in the U.S. labor force. However, with gender change in the labor force, several other challenges have emerged, such as demands for equal pay, against gender discrimination, for employee benefits to working mothers, and even next-generation demands such as egg-freezing as an employee benefit. Precisely, these political agendas are considered gendered issues; for this reason, these agendas find greater divergences among women voters across progressive and conservative party lines. While politically conservative women believe that policies around these issues increase government's interference in their lives by invading their personal choice, progressive women believe that these issues affect the lives and well-being of women so much that the government must take action and regulate them.

In addition to agenda-setting, other differences exist in the style of representation and political mechanisms developed by politically active women. In 2018, the Pew Research Center conducted a poll to identify differences in the perceptions of male and female voters about what qualities they expected in their representatives (Parker et al., 2018). Fifty-seven percent of respondents argued that women in top leadership positions in politics and business display different leadership styles from those of men. In a comparative study between male and female political insiders, Dittmar (2018) found women to be characterized by their congeniality, cooperation, consensus, and collaboration in their public discourse. In contrast, men favored rigid partisan lines and hierarchies.

There are deep differences between Republicans and Democrats regarding women's political leadership. Republican women explain that female candidates have to work harder than men to demonstrate their capacities, that U.S. voters are not ready to vote for women, and that women do not receive support from political parties to run (Parker et al., 2018). When they were questioned about differences about the performance of women in policymaking, two differences were found: a more positive vision of women's ability in education and healthcare policy areas, and a negative view of their performance in national security and defense.

THE "SQUAD" VS. THE ESTABLISHMENT: TWO STYLES OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

In addition to the 3.6-percent increment of elected congresswomen, the 116th Congress brought with it several innovations in its composition (Congressional Research Service, 2019). Many freshmen congresswomen were novel incorporations into the U.S. political arena because of their backgrounds. For example, Abby Finkenauer and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (30 years of age) are the youngest representatives in congressional history. Similarly, the incorporation of more women of color in Congress is a clear indicator of new power distribution. The 116th Congress includes twenty-five African-Americans, fifteen Latinas, ten Asian Americans, two Native Americans, and two Muslim women.

Within this diverse block of congresswomen, two contrasting profiles emerge: on the one hand, the women from the Establishment, on the other, the defying "Squad." The first cluster navigates institutional arrangements and occupies leadership positions without provoking great political changes in Congress. The second group comes from an ethnic and cultural background different from mainstream U.S. society, belongs to the most progressive wing of the Democratic Party, and is openly critical of political vices.

Nancy Pelosi leads the group of congresswomen from the Establishment. Speaker Pelosi is the third most influential person in the U.S. government, after the president and the vice president. Nancy Pelosi comes from a family of politicians. Although she is not very popular in U.S. politics, she has managed to position herself through key alliances, first in the state of California and later in the U.S. Congress.

In 1978, Pelosi won the seat for California's 12th District, which includes the city of San Francisco. By 2001, she was already the chair of the Democratic Caucus in the House of Representatives, and her work consisted of keeping all members of her party at bay. During this period, Pelosi was considered a progressive inside the Democratic Party (mainly because of her support to LGBT+ groups and healthcare reform), in spite of her moderate bills and votes in Congress. In 2007, she made history by becoming the first female Speaker of the House of Representatives. Nevertheless, the Affordable Care Act of 2011, her main political banner, was opposed by the electorate, and the next year the Democrats lost the majority in the House.

In 2019, the Democrats retook the majority of the House, and Nancy Pelosi had to negotiate extensively with her party members to retain the top leadership position there. Her main political challenge has been the division of the party around the impeachment of President Trump. In addition, Democrats are more divided than ever, not only between moderates and liberals; now there are multiple subgroups within the political spectrum, from the once-dominant New Democrats to the more progressive Socialists of America.

In July 2019, Nancy Pelosi spoke to the *New York Times* about the influence of the "Squad" inside Congress: "All these people have their public whatever and their Twitter world… But they didn't have any following. They are four people, and that's how many votes they got" (Dowd, 2019). Representative Ocasio-Cortez replied on Twitter, citing a series of Nancy Pelosi's criticisms of her, and ended by tweeting, "Having respect for ourselves doesn't mean we lack respect for her. It means we won't let everyday people be dismissed" (Ocasio-Cortez, 2018).

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez defeated the incumbent Joseph Crowley, who, besides two decades of representing New York's 14th District, had a leadership position in the House by seniority. Ocasio-Cortez's campaign was based on successful grassroots mobilization. She was young, Latina, a resident of the Bronx, a Boston University graduate, and underemployed as a waitress. With the sole experience of community organizer, Ocasio-Cortez became one of Congress's most media-savvy members.

Ocasio is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, which has systematically criticized money ruling politics in the United States. Her platform is based on universal healthcare insurance, free college education for all, guaranteed jobs, a minimum wage of US$15 per hour, affordable housing, and criminal justice system

reform (Stein, 2018). Later, she included the battle against climate change among all these campaign promises; this set of proposals was catalyzed by the introduction of the Green New Deal bill in 2019.

Ocasio-Cortez's radical ideas for social justice have found huge opposition among moderate Democrats. For example, heading to her first reelection in 2020, a moderate Democrat has challenged her primary election in the district. She has even been highly criticized by President Trump, who published the following in his Twitter account: "The 'Squad' is a very racist group of troublemakers who are young, inexperienced, and not very smart. They are pulling the once great Democrat Party far left… So bad for our Country!" (Trump, 2019).

The "Squad" took its name from a post by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. In November 2018, she published a picture of four freshmen congresswomen with the quote "Squad" in her social media accounts. This set of congresswomen has already been in the spotlight of public opinion for different reasons. The African-American, Muslim, Somalian refugee Ilhan Omar was immersed in an anti-Semitism scandal. Rashida Tlaib became visible because of her foul language while insulting Donald Trump in a rally. For her part, Ayana Presley defeated Capuano, a two-decade incumbent, becoming the first African-American woman to win a seat in Congress for the state of Massachusetts. All these women in government symbolize a set of demographic changes that U.S. society is still struggling to assimilate.

Conversely, in their time, the congresswomen from the Establishment also came to power with strong personal stories. They keep their seats by working in strategic alliances and on key laws. For example, New Yorker Nita Lowey has been in Congress for three decades now; she was the first woman to become chair of the House Democratic Caucus, and, as a member of the Appropriations Committee, she had to negotiate the budget approval that ended with the largest government shutdown in U.S. history in 2019. Similarly, Janice Schakowsky, a daughter of Jewish immigrants, has represented the 9th District of Illinois for two decades; like her old-school colleagues, she is often given a 100-percent score from ACLU (2019) because of her votes in favor of civil rights bills. Finally, Katherine Clark, from the 5th District of Massachusetts, which includes Boston, recently elected in 2013, has become the sixth most powerful person of the Democratic Party in the House of Representatives.

Beyond a membership in the "Squad" or being among the seniors, each of these congresswomen works independently; each makes alliances depending on the political moment and the needs of her district. Bills in Congress are always co-sponsored; this allows us to track a congresswoman's capacity to build alliances inside the institution and to measure the backing from other congress members for her agenda. The following table illustrates the legislative behavior of the congresswomen analyzed:

Table 3 BILLS SPONSORED IN 2019	
Name (District)	Bills
Nancy Pelosi (CA-12)	N/A
Katherine Clark (MA-5)	209
Janice Shakowsky (IL-9)	657
Nita Lowey (NY-17)	217
Alexandria Ocasio (NY-14)	282
Ilhan Omar (MN-5)	381
Ayana Presley (MA-7)	307
Rashida Tlaib (MI-13)	292
Source: Developed by the author with data from the U.S. Congressional Record (2019).	

It is clear that the seniority of experienced congresswomen and their position in strategic congressional committees enabled them to co-sponsor more bills without the need to display as much political activity as the freshmen congresswomen. Both the "Squad" and the women from the Establishment are very active in bill sponsorship; the first group is motivated by being in the political spotlight, while the second aims to maintain a prestigious reputation in the House.

Roll call votes are another important indicator of congresswomen's legislative performance. The following table shows their behavior in the institution during the first part of the 2019 session. Notice the unwritten rule of Congress that the speaker does not participate in roll call voting unless her vote is decisive to pass an important law.

Table 4 ROLL CALL VOTES DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE 2019 SESSION OF THE 116TH CONGRESS			
Congresswomen	Yea	Nay	Progressive bills voting rate %
Nancy Pelosi	30	4	100
Katherine Clark	142	58	100
Janice Shakowsky	144	56	100
Nita Lowey	142	58	99
Alexandria Ocasio	137	62	97
Ilhan Omar	132	63	97
Ayana Pressley	140	59	98
Rashida Tlaib	136	64	99
Source: Developed by the author with data from the U.S. Congressional Record (2019).			

Congresswomen's voting patterns are public information because they are subject to scrutiny from their constituents due to the logic of reelection. After looking at past data, it is interesting how progressives tended to vote "nay" more often on the floor. Moreover, they oppose bills related to progressive agendas. The main explanation is that the content of those bills does not necessarily imply radical policy changes, and progressive congresswomen expect their initiatives to be passed in the House.

Fundraising is a clear indicator of interest groups' trust in the political future of a member of Congress; this, in turn, is subject to the approval ratings from his/her constituency about his/her congressional performance. The amount of money raised is crucial for a congress member for financing campaigns; they even can use these resources to fund strategic development projects in their districts to increase support rates. In political analysis, it is as important to know how much a member of Congress is raising as it is to analyze where these resources are coming from. The latter can be seen in the following table:

Table 5
CONTRIBUTIONS COLLECTED BY CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES BY AUGUST 2019

Congress-women	For the 2018 Election		For the 2020 Election	
	Collected $US	Main contributor	Collected $US	Main contributor
N. Pelosi	4 537 320	Facebook	2 576 530	Facebook
K. Clark	1 223 164	JStreetPac	480 779	Blue Haven Initiative
J. Shakowsky	1 552 223	Namtor Inc	791 260	Development Specialists
N. Lowey	1 602 207	Bloomberg LP	560 410	Progeny Systems
A. Ocasio	2 084 873	SEUI	1 946 325	Google
I. Omar	1 073 812	EMILY's List	1 434 235	Apple Inc
A. Pressley	1 478 689	New Boston Ventures	381 113	New Boston Ventures
R. Tlaib	1 625 783	Eagle Canyon Capital	618 543	Microsoft

Source: Developed by the author with data from Open Secrets (2019).

Two things stand out about this data. The first is that greater media visibility of a congresswoman guarantees higher fundraising for her. The second is that, in the case of freshmen congresswomen, their position at the epicenter of U.S. politics has brought them more sponsors. It is particularly striking how Facebook was the top contributor to both Nancy Pelosi and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. In the case of Pelosi, this is explained by the fact that Silicon Valley is in her district, and she often lobbies

in favor of high tech. Meanwhile, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's popularity in social media ensured her Facebook's sponsorship.

The data presented in this section show us that there are marginal differences in the legislative behavior between senior and freshmen congresswomen. Women from the "Squad," like any freshmen congresswoman —even seniors, who did it at the beginning of their careers— have to work harder for more publicity, work more to build strategic alliances, and even concede points on their more contentious agenda in order to accede to leadership positions in the party. Then, in terms of voting patterns and bill sponsorship, the political behavior of the "Squad" is characterized by political mainstreaming. The moderate ideology of most members of Congress erodes the more progressive agenda of freshmen members of Congress. This fact, in turn, generates resistance to change in the institution and forces progressive legislators like those in the "Squad" to adopt representational styles similar to those of the women from the Establishment.

Conclusion

The plurality of the 116th Congress, in particular, the diversity among female members, represents greater political incorporation of the plurality of U.S. society. Two styles of female political representation contrast with each other. While congresswomen from the Establishment and the "Squad" share gender and partisanship characteristics, they differ in generations, political ideology, and platforms. Each profile has developed different political representational styles to navigate the rigid institutional arrangements in the U.S. Congress, an institution that from the beginning excluded women and whose political rules and conventions are imbued with masculinity.

Taken all together, gendered institutions, glass ceiling barriers, and the erosion of particular agendas to obtain top leadership positions keep women with higher political aspirations at a disadvantage in Congress. In this context, women's political incorporation will remain a gradual and slow process because of the Founding Fathers' institutional design, calculated to assimilate social change bit by bit. Furthermore, generalized hostility to gender quotas and affirmative action programs to empower women persists in the United States.

The "Squad" and the women from the Establishment present themselves as having contrasting styles of political representation. In terms of discourse, broader political platforms, and their political trajectories, they display tangible contrasts. However, regarding their legislative performance (bill sponsorship, roll call voting patterns, and fundraising to develop projects in their districts and reelection campaigns), I found no major differences between these groups. In other words, political

confrontation from the "Squad" occurs in social media, in committee hearings, and at their rallies. However, in terms of their congressional performance, the "Squad" and the Establishment both display similar strategies of political mainstreaming.

In addition, I found that none of the congresswomen analyzed was characterized by fighting for a feminist agenda. In fact, at this point in the 116th Congress, no women's rights law has been passed so far. Almost every congresswoman expressed her sympathy for women's movements such as #MeToo, #Time'sUp, and the Women's March. But, beyond that sympathy, they have not sponsored bills against sexual harassment or other demands of these movements. This means that congresswomen tend to represent the general public more and fight for the demands of their constituents than for women's policy.

The profiles of every congresswomen studied shows they entered into politics with strong personal histories and progressive agendas, but in different generations and in the diverse contexts of their specific districts. Hence, Alexandria Ocasio and Nancy Pelosi spearhead two different styles of political leadership despite their similar performance in Congress. One stimulates youth with her passionate speeches and incorporates topics resonating in more inclusive social spheres with her political agenda, while the other keeps Trump at bay and heads up complicated congressional negotiations. In both cases, they have been progressive vanguards across two different generations. Both profiles, senior and freshmen congresswomen, have changed women's politics, but, in the first session of the 116th Congress, neither has led to a profound change in women's policies.

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