

voters who served in the military during World War II, many of whom cast their first vote for FDR and thereafter became consistent Democratic supporters. Lacking this wartime cohort, Norpoth suggests that FDR's New Deal likely would not by itself have established the durable Democratic voting coalition that dominated electoral politics through the 1960s.

In the concluding chapter, Norpoth makes the case that in explaining FDR's unprecedented and enduring level of popularity, the president was more than the beneficiary of events outside his control, particular a world war. Rather than a passive bystander, Roosevelt, based in part on private polling conducted by Cantril, proved adept at leveraging events through public appeals to move public opinion toward greater support of his policy proposals. Lacking these events, his appeals might have fallen on deaf ears. At the same time, however, it required skilled leadership to recognize when events gave him the opportunity to utilize the "bully pulpit." Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in his successful effort, beginning as early as 1937, to lay the groundwork for a more interventionist foreign policy, buttressed by a massive outlay in military expenditures.

Norpoth writes sparingly; his prose is direct, his points succinct. For the most part, he lets the survey data speak for itself, and he makes sure to note when that data is not as conclusive as one might like, as when speculating regarding the impact of the New Deal on FDR's popular support. The lack of comparable polling during FDR's first term is unfortunate, since it makes it more difficult to assess Norpoth's claim that the New Deal did not lead to a durable partisan realignment. Nor does the author address the impact of ideological sorting on popular approval during the two most recent decades and how FDR might have fared in the current era, when partisan affiliation is a much more accurate indicator of ideology than in his time. Some might question whether sustained approval at the levels he enjoyed is even possible in today's deeply partisan, polarized environment. The lack of answers to these questions, however, should not detract from what is a well-researched, concisely and cogently written examination of a crucial period in public polling—one that sheds new light on the reasons for Roosevelt's enduring popularity.

**A Seat at the Table: Congresswomen's Perspectives on Why Their Presence Matters.** By Kelly Dittmar, Kira Sanbonmatsu, and Susan J. Carroll. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. 272p. \$99.00 cloth, \$27.95 paper.  
doi:10.1017/S1537592719000033

— Amy Steigerwalt, *Georgia State University*

The 2018 midterm elections broke previous records in terms of the number of women running for, and being elected to, the U.S. Congress. More than 250 women

advanced to the general elections, far besting the record set in 2016 of 183 female candidates. And a number of those successfully elected mark historical firsts: the first female Native American representative (Deb Haaland, New Mexico), the first African American female representative from Massachusetts (Ayanna Pressley), the first female Palestinian American (and also first female Muslim) representative (Rashida Tlaib, Michigan), and the first female senator from Arizona (Kyrsten Sinema). However, even as these records were set and milestones achieved, women still make up a minority of the nation's representatives: Prior to the 2018 elections, 20% of seats in Congress were held by women, and even with a record 125 women serving in Congress in 2019, the U.S. Congress is still over 75% male. Much like the vaunted 1992 "Year of the Woman," which saw the number of women in the Senate triple—from two seats to six—the electoral realities suggest that women still have a significant mountain to climb.

*A Seat at the Table* is a timely exploration of why female representation in Congress matters, as told through the voices of female members themselves. Kelly Dittmar, Kira Sanbonmatsu, and Susan J. Carroll offer a comprehensive and revealing examination of the female members of the 114th Congress (2015–17) and how they view their role there. Taking advantage of impressive and unprecedented (at least in modern times) access to sitting members, Dittmar, Sanbonmatsu, and Carroll allow the female members to explain why their gender makes a difference, exploring everything from relationships with constituents to the effects of increased party polarization to changes they have witnessed in policy agendas and institutional rules. The book excels in particular in its efforts to highlight the diversity of women's experiences and policy positions, as opposed to presenting women as a monolithic group.

The book is fundamentally a story about why having such a seat is so essential. As Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) explains, "when you're not in the room, people are having a conversation about you. And when you're in the room, they're having a conversation with you" (p. 40). That story begins on familiar terrain: Female members emphasized both the desire to speak for women and other unrepresented voices, but also the hazards of being viewed as competent only about these sets of issues. Here is also, however, where the authors start to do the important work of delving into the nuances of how women *differ*. For example, Chapter 3 illuminates how the relative dearth of Republican women changes their perceptions of the types of strides that they are making in terms of leadership and setting the policy agenda. While women made up 34% of the House Democratic caucus in the 114th Congress, women represented less than 10% of the House Republican caucus (CRS Report R43689, December 5, 2016). This disparity translated into only a single

Republican woman committee chair during that Congress (p. 84).

Chapters 4 and 5 delve into the tension between increasing partisan polarization and the desire of members to work across the aisle in crafting bipartisan legislation. The party polarization discussion is perhaps notable for the extent to which the comments could be from any member of the Congress. What it does offer, however, is a strong reminder that even so-called women's issues are not viewed monolithically by women: Some of the strongest partisan debates are over issues such as abortion and immigration. Alternatively, Chapter 5 finds that women from both parties believe that they are more likely to work together in a bipartisan fashion than are their male colleagues. An intriguing suggestion, ripe for future research, is that this increased, female-led bipartisanship is an unexpected, positive result of women seeking single-sex spaces, such as Barbara's Mikulski's (D-MD) famous female senator dinners in response to their minority status in Congress.

The final chapters grapple with how women being in the room changes the conversation itself. Here is where the book makes its most significant contributions. The authors find that women in office alter both the policy agenda and the institution itself (Chaps. 6–7). They deliberately do not define “women's issues,” instead letting the members do it themselves. This choice allows the diversity of issues to emerge and protects against privileging those championed by white, Democratic females. Notable is the discussion about the ways in which women of color adopt an “expanded agenda” to encompass both policy issues raised by nonminority women and those, such as mass incarceration and immigration, that more directly influence minorities (p. 166). These chapters focus not just on the issues women champion but also, perhaps more importantly, on a distinct set of perspectives and experiences offered by women that alters the conversations themselves.

For example, the authors highlight how strong policy differences divide women with respect to abortion, but also how they all prioritize the issue given its personal stake in their lives; these personal ties then change the content of the conversations. In all of the policy areas discussed, the overarching point is that the default of a white male does not actually reflect reality: This group comprises less than half the population, and, with respect to many issues across the policy spectrum, a relatively small minority of those affected. The result is that policy solutions that use this group and its perspective as the default may be inadequate. Female members' discussions about women's health, and especially minority women's health, sexual assault, and issues facing primary caregivers (of both children and the elderly), as well as the experiences and policy issues championed by female veterans, Latinas, African American women, and Asian American women,

illustrated these concerns, and the wide diversity in perspective among women with respect to them.

Diversity can also change the institution itself, in ways big and small. The authors draw out from their interviews how increasing the number of women and people of color in positions of power helps alter our conception of who can hold these positions in the first place. That in turn increases the likelihood that women, and people of color, will be invited to the table. The female members also suggest that women come with a different perspective on *how* to lead and legislate, one that is about “getting it done,” with an emphasis on pragmatism and consensus over ego and individual accomplishment. These segments provide a wealth of ideas for future research.

I both thoroughly enjoyed and utterly hated reading *A Seat at the Table*—it is a fascinating exploration of what female members of Congress think and how they perceive themselves and the world they operate within. But I was also repeatedly struck by the thought that it is incredible that women in power still feel the need to justify why they should have a seat at the table at all, much less why their having a seat matters quite a lot. Even today, the United States continues to struggle with ensuring that those most affected by issues are not left out of the rooms and institutions where these conversations take place altogether. And these concerns are exponentially magnified when we turn to women of color and, to a lesser degree, conservative women.

Dittmar, Sanbonmatsu, and Carroll do an excellent job of illuminating, through the voices of Members of Congress, what the various findings we have seen reported over the past few decades actually mean to those they most directly impacted. This book brings to life many of the rigorous empirical studies that have been recently published, and does a great job connecting the interview findings to these previous studies. And by doing so, it makes many of these findings more real for both scholars and laypersons alike, while also reaffirming the findings of these various studies. It also pushes the literature further by emphasizing the heterogeneity of women's views and experiences. The authors remind us that a seat is still needed for women, and that we actually need multiple seats to ensure that the totality of women's experiences are represented in the U.S. Congress.

**Perceptions of a Polarized Court: How Division among Justices Shapes the Supreme Court's Public Image.** By

Michael F. Salamone. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2018.

214p. \$94.50 cloth, \$32.95 paper.

doi:10.1017/S1537592719000471

— Michael J. Nelson, *Pennsylvania State University*

The Senate's fall 2018 confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh cemented a likely Republican majority on the Supreme Court for a generation and drew attention to that