

Arizona Senate Election 2024

Peri Abrahm

Department of Communications, Gonzaga University

Comm 480: Communications and Democracy

Dr. Rebecca Donaway

December 10, 2024

Election

The 2024 Arizona Senate election will be held during the general elections, on November

5th. Ruben Gallego and Kari Lake are the two candidates running for the Senate position in Arizona. Ruben Gallego was raised by a single immigrant mother and served in the Marines during the Iraq war. He is running as the Democratic delegate and is in the U.S House, representing Arizona's 3rd congressional district (Ruben Gallego - Ballotpedia, 2024.). He took his place in office January 2023 and will end his term January 2025. He has served as chairman of Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples; the Committee of Armed Services, and the Committee of Natural Resources all of which are active endorsers on his campaign. The community also sees a lot of support from the veterans (Task Force Butler, 2022). He is running to, "defend our democracy, hold corrupt politicians accountable, and preserve a womans right to an abortion." (Ruben Gallego – Ballotpedia, 2024).

Kari Lake, Gallego's opponent, is the candidate for the Republican party. Lake ran last term against Krysten Sinema, an independent representative, now the current Senator of Arizona. Her media career began as an anchor for Fox News in Pheonix, until the transition into politics and ran for governor in 2022. Her political identity has shifted over the years, starting as a member of the Republican party until Nov. 3, 2006, then changed to independent, shortly after a Democrat in 2008, and then back to Republican in 2012 (Kari Lake – Ballotpedia, 2024). Lake strongly promotes action echoing Trump and is running on the platform of "securing boarders, energy independence, safe streets, education not indoctrination, pushing against the radical Biden agenda, and preserving the Western heritage of Arizona," (Kari Lake – Ballotpedia, 2024).

These two candidates are looking to take the position of incumbent, Kyrsten Sinema, who ran as an independent and is not seeking re-election in 2024; where most endorsements now follow Gallego (Hansan, 2024). As of now, the outcome of this Senate election will affect the partisan balance of the US Senate (Kari Lake - Ballotpedia, 2024), nationwide and is predicted to be another close call, with polls showing only slight preference to Gallego; most recent reports

suggest he only a 4-6 percentage-points ahead of Lake (The Arizona Republic, 2024; Wiederkehr, 2024).

This topic is interesting because Arizona has been a “purple state,” a swing state, for quite some time (Rakich, 2020). Arizona’s past three election seasons have seen inconsistencies and uncertainty with how the final polls might play out. The shifting of the state really took off when Clinton won Arizona in 1996. Before Clinton there was no Democratic president candidate that had such success. There was no Democratic representation and affiliation from 2008 to 2018. The patterns for the “close calls” were extremely valuable information in predicting the future of the state (Rakich, 2020). In 2016, Arizona started to see major shifts in their political demographics where Trump just barely won which prompted the 2018 Senate election turn out. In the 2018 Senate elections, the Democratic candidate Kyrsten Sinema won the third consecutive and most pivotal election to AZ shifting left.

Based off polling and population statistics, Arizona’s Latino voters have been a primary resource of Democratic achievement (Rakich, 2020). These results also include the increase in Black and Native communities in Arizona and their recent accessibility to voting, such as age and citizenship. The influx of newly registered voters and higher-educated voters are positively correlated creating a more significant lean to the left (Rakich, 2020). The movement from suburban voters from Republican to Democrats since the 2016 elections is projected evidence of the radical shift. Arizona’s population responded negatively to how Trump and Republicans had handled the fundamental tactics of covid, the economy, and public political reasons (such as protests) which has transpired over to the Senate ruling of this year (Rakich, 2020). Lake is a large promoter of the Trump movement and all the MAGA qualities seen in Agenda47, her supporter's range from blue-collar, middle-class conservatives to upper class powerful leaders. She has a large following of first responders (firefighters and police force endorsements) and has

a very vocal following in the urban areas of Arizona (Kari – Lake Ballotpedia, 2024) . This point is also what makes Arizona such a fascinating swing state; unlike the other “battleground” states the urban and city central area is more Republican than Democrat.

Gallego’s been a supporter of Vice President Harris and promotes similar discourse around top political issues. He is currently leading in the polls and continues to gain attention through Arizona (Wiederkehr, 2024). His largest sense of support comes from veterans. He is an advocate of veterans who’ve been displaced and unsupported and promises a future of aid. After his service in the Iraq war, he’s created a whole platform and following based off veteran aid (Gallego, 2024). This gives him a patriotic identity that isn’t related to the “Trump America” which appeals and provides a political connection to a large range of voters, those who are undecided but patriotic, those who are less extreme Republicans, and Democrats. Gallego has raised more with \$32,349,690 compared to Lake with \$10,371,320 as of sept 25. 2024 (*Kari Lake - Ballotpedia, 2024*), which has also provided him with an economic advantage for these last two months. The race between Lake and Gallego is close, however if keeping their current trajectory Arizona will be blue and the fate of the presidential results might just be determined by these results.

Campaign Messaging

Candidates Speech

Republican Senator candidate, Kari Lake gave her speech at the Republican National Convention on July 16, 2024, in Milwaukee. Her speech was seven minutes which covered her suggested policies for the economy, reproduction rights, immigration/the border and its relation to the drug crisis. Lake makes a handful of negative claims towards the Democrat candidates, allegations, and acknowledgment of perpetual “fake news.” People were oriented towards Lake,

as she was on stage, at the podium in the National convention arena. Her speech opened by acknowledging and welcoming the people in the space; she then clarified and pointed to the news teams in the back and *unwelcomed* them for their falsified claims against her platform, she says “The guys up in the fake news, have worn out your welcome” which creates one of many loud reactions from the crowd, some of cheering and some booing.

The audience is presenting very “Americanized,” dressed in an array of cowboy hats, boots, colors of the flag, and formal suits. She asserts that “this is MAGA energy!” The audience is consistent in holding their Trump and Vance signs, as well as other MAGA paraphernalia. Her speech introduces policies that she is in support of and driven by. However, there is very minimal detail of action nor a plan. She takes multiple hits at her opponent Ruben Gallego and other Democratic representatives; often in the form of liberals spreading false information about border, Trump, and the economy or about leniencies with immigration. She uses token words like Bidenomics, and Maganomics which creates a reaction from the audience in the form of a chant, “build the wall.” Lake then tackles one of her larger concerns in her concluding thoughts, in the form of an analogy. She identifies herself as mother multiple times in the speech and threatens that “A middle-aged fed-up mother in DC” is comparable and as dangerous as getting in-between a mother bear and her cub. She then makes a comment on her temper, “and I haven’t even started my hot flashes yet, just you wait.” This analogy was in relation to the protection of our kids, especially from the drugs being “brought over by immigrants.” She endorses Trump and the Republican party as she is cheered for and shares her admirations for American’s while claiming that “we are more united than we think.”

Democrat candidate, Ruben Gallego, gave a speech at the Democratic National convention on August 22, 2024, in Chicago, the last day of the DNC. His speech was about five minutes long and it maintained his primary theme of veteran support. The beginning of his

speech is muffled a bit from the audience's chants "Ruben, Ruben, Ruben" and applause. The signage of the crowd is much more neutral, with USA signs and American flags being the primary accessory of the audience. Gallego took the podium on the stage of the convention arena while addressing his fellow Arizonians in the crowd ahead. He provides recognition to his identities (father, husband, congressman, proud Arizonian, and the most amplified, a veteran) and then utilizes the pathos of his upbringing, sharing the harshness of his childhood. He tells the American story of building yourself up from nothing to having political power and finding space to achieve success. He talks largely on policy and the platform on government's "duty to care." In this initiative he touches on the economy, healthcare, and border control. Gallego mentions his opponent Kari Lake and the Republican leadership in reference to "who doesn't stand with us", and the lack of respect those Republicans project onto the system and state. Some of his most notable quotes are "putting our country over politics," "don't just respect our service, revere it" and of course the title of the speech all together, "Trump doesn't stand with us."

Interviews

Kari Lake was being interviewed by Julie Tsirkin, with NBC news on Oct 8, 2024. They had a seventeen-minute interview with a traditional question and answer format. A section that stood out was Lake's response to abortion and reproductive healthcare (1:10-3:32). Lake is adamant that she will not vote for a nationwide abortion ban, and that the choice should be left up to the states, a decision made by the people. She emphasizes her trust in the men and women of Arizona to make the right decision for what extent there should be abortion banning. At this point, some of her narratives start becoming contradictory of each other. Tsirkin brings up Lake's past reaction to the initiative on the ball for the 15-week abortion law being "too extreme", but Lake then proceeds to show support for the law that is currently in place.

From there, Tsirkin asks a question on behalf of Lake's identity, she brings up Melania Trump, a Republican woman, who says, "it is imperative that women have the choice, and the government should not be involved," and how does Lake, a Republican woman, interpret that stance. Lake responds that "everybody is going to have a different opinion" which is why it is important to leave it up to people and the states, and "we are going to get that choice." The conversation strays away from reproductive rights and transitions into what democracy means and looks like in Arizona. The next section was Lake's suggestions on polling and the issues of trust. Tsirkin brings up the topic of polling and asks for clarification on who Lake would suggest the people trust. On behalf of the people, if you can't trust the public polling or the polling of the Democratic party, then who do they trust. She responds, "They can trust me." (9:50- 15:30). This then takes a turn into border control and what policy and plans Lake sees fit -- to work alongside Trump's mission of mass deportation. The rest of the interview becomes a bit tension filled as there is present agitation and interruptions from Lake that derail conversations of policy, clarification, and action.

Ruben Gallego had an interview on ABC with Ben Brown, on June 3, 2024. Gallego had the interview in one of his favorite Mexican restaurants, El Mesquite Cosina Mexican. They began by talking about why he wants to make the switch from the House to Senate. He describes how he feels as if he can do more helping the everyday people of Arizona instead of compromising with 435 people to make laws. Gallego addresses his top priorities; immigration, economy, health care and reproductive rights. Brown begins his questioning with how confident Gallego feels he will get legislation to pass. He responds with recognition of the concern of rallying the people to support his causes but proves his strategies have paid off in form of the Native American Child Protection Act. The conversation moves to the economy, the influx on inflation and how Gallego is actively reducing costs for certain groups but recognizes inflation

needs to decrease generally. He passed the inflation reduction act which brought pharmaceutical costs down for seniors and acknowledges that there is much more work to be done. In terms of immigration, Gallego wants to secure the border, increase border control, custom officers, and asylum judges. He also notes that increasing ports of entry might help navigate the issues both immigration wise and economically, with more flow of production. There was a quick mention of education and how the costs of education need to become more accessible, where he promotes loan forgiveness and the lowering of taxes on educational debt. In terms of health care, he was in support of the Democrat's views on abortion and the women right to choose, as well as access to affordable psychological health care/therapy, especially for veterans. His suggestions are investments in private and public sectors which would then help regulate other concerning attributes of America.

Campaign Ads

Kari Lakes most recent campaign ad focused more on attacking her opponent Ruben Gallego rather than her policy. Further, it is narrated by former president Donald Trump. Trump insults, mispronounces, and attacks Gallego for his policy and support of immigration rights and addressing systematic oppression. Trump yells, "He's an open borders, defund the police maniac." With a following mispronunciation of "Gallego." There is a panorama of the crowds at rallies and then "power" embodied pictures of Trump. This includes his iconic fist in air, with blood all over his face attempted assassination picture. The ad ends by suggesting that "we can vote for the Trump agenda twice", one for presidency and one for Senator.

Gallego's political campaign ad highlights his service and dedication to veteran care as well as emphasizing the strong relationship he has built with the Navajo Nation. He focuses this ad more on the acclaiming side and promotes relationships, service and sacrifice, and protection

of the people. Two of his fellow soldiers from Iraq are speaking about Gallego's character and bravery throughout the ad. They are both members of the Navajo nation and expressed the visibility they feel from Gallego. They introduce themselves in their native language and then transition into applauding what Gallego has already done to benefit the people of Arizona, specifically the indigenous people. There is no context or relation to Kari Lake in any of this ad.

Analysis

The messaging seemed to be effective on both sides, even though the outcomes of the Senate election contradicted the presidential results. The Republican messaging was carried through heavily by Lake, but in a less appealing way. Arizonians showed more confidence in Trump than Lake and Gallego was strategic enough to reach part of the Trump or Republican audience that didn't entrust in Lake's leadership. Lake's platform was nearly identical to Trump's in terms of policy and action, but she characterized herself as an extreme and feminized version of Trump, "Trump in heels" (Altschuler, 2024). Certain local initiatives were seen as too presumptuous for the state to prioritize (Tsirkin, 2024), which is similar to how she lost before, following her continual questioning of democracy and voting, with her defamation case of 2022 (Altschuler, 2024). Gallego was a valuable candidate for this term, his views resonated both with the progressive and Democratic style of governing while also using patriotism and his war-vet persona as sources of relation with conservative individuals who didn't resonate as drastically with Lake's ideologies.

Gallego was successful in his advocacy of fixing the nation's broken immigration system, fighting for the mental and physical well-being of veterans, and the protection of women's reproductive rights. His messaging was filled with progressive goals but applicable to a majority of the conservative's desires and policy. His rhetoric was crafted to fit the larger moderate

communities. There was prior confidence that he would get majority of the Democratic votes which pushed him to focus his attention on resonating with the undecided voters (Cooper, 2024), “Rhetoric is concerned with the symbols leaders use to persuade, the arguments in their political messages, and the verbal style in which talks and tweets are delivered,” (Perloff, 2024, 270). Gallego made sure his digital footprint and live interactions strayed from extremism and protected his public identity of being a progressive but moderate candidate (Catalini, 2024).

We see aspects of bias gendered perception for the female candidate, Kari Lake. In the final result, Arizona concluded with a split ballot; nominating mixed parties rather than a consecutive group for Governing. With the popular and House votes favoring Donald Trump, a Republican rather than Harris, a Democrat and then favoring Rubin Gallego, a Democrat over Lake, a Republican calls for the analysis of where she went wrong. Part of the loss might stem from the strategic stereotype theory and how that applies to gender. For a female candidate, one is already put at a disadvantage regarding likeliness of succeeding and maintaining a strong enough following. She leaned into the framing of a female echo of Trump (Powel, 2024) but also is dismissed and called hostile and irrational (Cooper, 2024). The gender prejudice in the conservative group might have been a reason for her downfall in community support as well as an explanation for the split ballot. The emotionalism of female candidates often stands in the way of their success in terms of public decision. Lake really leaned into her role as a mother and caretaker which primes the stereotypical response of questioning female’s capabilities to maintain both family and political career as well as primes that narrative into the foundation of a platform (McGregor et al., 2017). Lake’s messaging, an echo of Donald Trump, was not received as enthusiastically, political scientist Larry Sabato says to, *The Hill*, “Kari Lake is a case unto herself...the way she comes across, there’s just an arrogance that turns people off,” (Altschuler, 2024).

A common result that “people don’t respond to trump wannabees as much as the man himself.” (Altschuler, 2024). Lake’s points of action were in sync with the legislation of Trump’s initiatives, mass deportations and strict boarder regulations, educational restructuring and banning's, and restrictions on woman’s healthcare, but elements of her personality, public appearance, and history of defeat were all accounted for in her loss. The way that gender plays a role in credibility and personification is a large consideration for the turn out. Trump is as outlandish and outspoken as Lake, however, the reactions to the commentary are aligned with the misogynistic following of democracy and presumed gendered bias. The ‘turn-off’ stems from gendered stereotypes and the association between behaviors and gender. Conservatively, caring and other ‘communal’ traits are best represented by woman whereas, dominance, decisiveness and other agonist behaviors are embodied by males (McGregor, 2016). The public's reaction to Lake explains this stereotypical role in political appearance, it wasn’t so much the inappropriateness of the behaviors it was who was doing them that threw the public’s **perception.**

News Coverage and Polling

Ruben Gallego spoke on Tuesday night at the Arizona Democrat party. His speech was shown on 12News, on November 5th, 2024, where he “confidently claims early victory over Kari Lake.” This speech was given before any results were finalized but with the recent polling, he was projected to win. Gallego’s speech reidentifies his key characteristics of being a father, veteran, and proud Arizonan; he offers gratitude and appreciation towards his family and emphasizes the incredible support from each one of his family members. He tells his story of the “American Dream,” being from a low-class immigrant family to someone who fought for their country to a leader in a democracy who “will be fighting for you in Washington D.C.” (7:33). He continues on with the metaphor of fighting and gets the crowd riled up when he reflects on his

journey. Gallego's speech was illuding to acceptance and congratulatory tones that accompanied ten minutes of thanking people and expressing his motivations for how he is going to fight for them in office. The News Caster's recap at the end, confirmed the attitudes of acceptance and victory while also acknowledging Gallego's efforts in the political game, being a Congressman since 2014 in the South Phoenix district and not as widely known as his opponent Kari Lake who has much more name recognition from being a news anchor news and running for governor, Gallego is on "on the brink of history" in his near victory.

Kari Lake's final rally was hosted at the Yavapai County courthouse in Prescott, a night before the general elections were held. The polls were read aloud by the news woman, then Kari Lake acknowledges the dedication of the people to come out and rally in the forty-degree weather. She encourages her supporters to make phone calls and get people to vote while inviting entertainment on stage. During the news segment there are several interviews being conducted with Lake's supporters about why they are here to vote for her. People are in favor of her conservative views in comparison to Gallego and her alliance with Trump's policy. Lake then highlights her own policy by negatively representing Gallego's policies. When talking about immigration she refers to her opponent, "his family are cartel members" (2:10) and on the Woke DC agenda Lake suggests that Gallego has voted to have children "brainwashed and physically mutilated" (2:19). Lake claims that her internal polling shows her ahead but emphasizes the closeness of this race and that every vote matters. She intimately engages with her supporters and walks around the crowd at the end of her rally.

One of the largest topics in the Arizona Senate race has been women's health care, specifically the legislation surrounding a womans right to an abortion. Lake and Gallego promote opposing views on their campaign websites. Kari Lake's opening line points to her maternal position and her value on life. It says that she wants to do what she can to help a woman choose

life, and “to choose to bring the blessing into existence.” Lake is in favor of keeping abortion an issue for the states to decide and isn’t one for the federal government to regulate. She wants to focus on ensuring mothers have the support they need to “choose life” and not make any decisions “they may well later regret.” In this article of her campaign, you can “join our fight” and enter in mailing information, donate, and follow upcoming events.

Ruben Gallego’s campaign page on abortion recognizes how it is a “fundamental right” that has been historically supported. A women’s right to an abortion is something that Gallego is “proud” to defend and make accessible. Gallego has co-sponsored the Women’s Health Protection Act and the My Body, My Data Act to help protect the autonomy of women. The final section of the article points to action in “waiving the filibuster to codify Roe v. Wade.”

Public Polling

NBC News reports Gallego taking the lead with 49.7% compared to Lake with 48.2% and Eduardo Quintana with 2.4%. With 89% of the votes reported, the projections are in favor of Ruben Gallego for Senate. NBC provides a breakdown of polling information and data about voter's gender, ethnicity, race, and county. Ruben Gallego Is leading with 1,496,262 votes. And Kari Lake Is following behind with 1,442,440 votes. Gallego took the lead in five counties all of which were metropolitan or urban communities which explains how Kari Lake won 10 of the 15 counties and still lost in the popular vote. The national exit polls are showing women in more support of Gallego than men, with 52% of the voters being women 49% being men. Ethnically, 46% of Gallegos’s voters were White where Kari Lake had 53%, Gallego had 61% Hispanic/Latino voters and only 37% for Lake; there is not enough data to represent any other demographic for the “Are you” poll. Race was polled at 46% white and 58% Non-white for Gallego, 53% white and 38% Non-white for Lake. Lastly NBC projects the votes that were early mail in vs the in-person polls, 84% of the total votes were mailed in 52% for Gallego and 47%

for Lake. On election day 17% of the total ballots were cast, 55% for Lake and 42% for Gallego. This has been a common trend for Arizona, a pattern in which in-person voters are more often Republican on the day of election compared to the Democrat engagement primarily happening via mail (Hansen, 2024). All the NBC news was predictive of what the expected call will be in Arizona, it is a consensus that Gallego will be the Arizona-elect for the 2024 Senator race, but the source has not officially called it (NBC, 2024).

Comparatively, ABC 15 has also suggested that Gallego wins the Senate election against Lake, according to the decision desk. The polling is close enough to infer the win, but no official AP calling has been made. The short four-minute clip was posted at 6 pm on November 9th and then the article updated on Nov 10th. The newscaster walks through the stats and the polling that is available, confirming that even with the margin of error (+- 3%), there is no likelihood of Kari Lake being able to overthrow the lead of Gallego. The data analyst David Archard confirms that 88-89% of the estimated vote total is in and Rubin Gallego on the last day has expanded his lead by 45,000 over Lake which means, this late into the count, that she must win 55,000+ to come close to Gallego which isn't possible with the numbers left. They also talk about how Arizona has officially called their slip ballot, in support of Democratic candidate Gallego but confirming the Republican-elect president Donald Trump. The decision desk calls for Trump today with the lead over Harris being six points, or 185,000 votes. This is interesting in comparison with Gallego because it means that 220,000 Arizonians decided to vote for Trump a Republican and Gallego a Democrat, in this election. This is a historical pattern seen in swing states, especially in Arizona, so the split balloting is not as much of a shock as it is thought to be (ABC15, 2024).

Analysis

The polling in Arizona was generally accurate in predicting the outcomes of the election. Public polling contiguously showed Ruben Gallego in a slight lead. Gallego won the Senate race, with roughly 80,000 leading votes when the election was called. With Arizona being one of the most influential swing states it was no surprise that accurate interpretations of polling were hard to come by. The polling up until the end was too close to make an accurate assumption for who was going to win, especially with the circumstances of finishing elections on a split ballot. As numbers for Trump rose Lake's did too but not as significantly as Gallego's with Harris. AP news found that 1:10 Trump voters split the ballot, favoring Gallego, an 8:10 ratio for Lake and Trump, which is less than the 9:10 ratio of Harris and Gallego votes (Catalini, 2024). The polling that was published by left or moderate news sources were more accurate than the one's from more conservative sites. The conservative sources used more internal polling from Lake's administration, in which she often suggested that public polling was untrustworthy and inaccurate and that from her data she was and had continued to be in the lead (Tsirkin, 2024). Looking back at when polling data started in August, Gallego maintained a lead ranging from +5 to +15 points for nearly two months before Lake hit a lead in the October 26-28 polling, with +1. Gallego takes the lead again ranging from +3 to +9 points, following the poll suggesting Lake's lead (Catalini, 2024). Out of the next twenty projections, two capture a one-point lead for Lake while the others continue to have Gallego leading with +1 to +9 points. The polling indicates that on November 3-4 Lake was up by one point but when the AP called the race, Gallego took his victory by +3 points with a 51.1% to 47.1% vote. (Catalini, 2024).

The news played a large role in the public's understanding of what the polls were predicting, because depending on the platform polls were either swayed or called untrustworthy. A candidate's decision to trust polling or not directly shapes how the public views the data (Klaas, 2024). There are challenges with polling in such a devoutly purple state because of how

close the races tend to be, and the continual need for extra days of calculation to finish the final wave of votes, or enough to confidently call the race (Hansen, 2024). The news often followed the candidates in relation to the Presidential election, but as the election date got closer the news documented more of their individuality and focused on their platforms apart from their fellow party nominees. The news often made Lake look less desirable, for she was often seen on camera with a temper or rejecting the data presented. On different platforms (conservative and liberal), Lake has created an image for herself, one that neglects confrontation, is outwardly disrespectful, racist, sexist, and homophobic, and emanates similar extremist passion as other Republican leaders (Sievers, 2024). This exponentially hindered her image in Arizona and therefore was constantly addressed when on air (Tsirkin, 2024).

Additional Context

Swing states inherently provoke more public stress and attention. The decisions for the country come down to a few states that show little consistency or predictability in which way they will go. Arizona's demographics alter enough that when it comes to gaging the political identity of different groups, data and predictions differ. The additional pressures of being an integral factor in determining the conclusive results, creates a realm of public power and "civic engagement." Gerken (2009), talks about the involvement and the caring for election's outcomes stems from how energized the candidates are in leading a campaign. The communities that are politically active in swing states tend to be louder and abundantly more devoted to their desired candidate which contributes to the extreme polarization of parties in the nation. The polarization in Arizona is good for predicting which social groups might support or oppose different candidates or policies (Rakich, 2020). Using the data collected from previous years some patterns are utilized to suggest potential results, however, as mentioned above the demographics

of Arizona fluctuate enough, that even with the patterns and accumulation of data over the years results are ambiguous. Looking at the metropolitan areas of Arizona, students and young adults tend to be the final determinant of which way the state will swing (NBCUniversal, 2024).

A byproduct of polarization often takes the form of political mis and disinformation. Individual expression of opinions on candidates or policy isn't regulated in the same way as it is on public platforms. The individual thread of information often is contaminated by intentional disinformation or is lacking in validity and unintentionally misrepresented and distributed as misinformation. Lake and Gallego had very public groups of supporters, their initial following was abundantly clear, but the size of their communities wasn't representative enough to predict how the result would conclude. Lake, faced the constraints of gender, being a female candidate for a misogynistic party and system framed her look less qualified than her extremist counterparts. She was seen as feminized trump, which politically was less desirable than the man himself (Altschuler, 2024).

Gallego faced racial challenges, he is now the first Latino Senator in the history of the United States (Catalini, 2024), which produced a great deal of discomfort and protest from the conservative party. Trump and Lake would consistently use Gallego's ethnicity against him and created discourse that villainized him and or his family. Lake and Trump accused Gallego's family for being a part of the cartel and was used as a primary example for why the boarder is a threat to America (Altschuler, 2024). These rumors were received as the truth and continuously was a focal point in Gallego's controversy. These racial attacks were perpetuated through speeches, interviews, and campaign ads, in addition to other strikes to his identity and level of qualification. Similar rhetoric was shared between Trump and Harris in that because Gallego and Harris have both been in prior positions of governing and authority they should've completed the

tasks they are suggesting rather than prolonging their plans (Schmid, et.al., 2024). As we know, that isn't how positions of authority work and certain large-scale changes can't be feasible in all governing positions.

Autopsy Report

What happened?

The results of the 2024 Arizona Senate election were in favor of Ruben Gallego. Ruben Gallego beat his running mate Kari Lake with 51% of the vote to 47%. The AP didn't call the Arizona Senate race until November 11th because calculations were still being made. The AP called the race at 11:49pm on the 11th, results being in favor of Gallego with 50% of the votes compared to 48% of the votes going to Lake with the margin of 73,000 votes and 95% total votes counted. Arizona called the elections with a split ballot. Gallego did better with several of the key voting groups in comparison to Harris, alternatively Lake did worse than Trump. In Arizona Gallego won the Hispanic men popular vote, whereas Trump and Harris split them, same with the sum of non-white men with college degrees, Gallego took the lead and Trump and Harris split (ABC, 2024).

Gallego had large leads over lake in all four core Democratic counties and was already slightly ahead in Maricopa, a Republican County and a necessary win for Lake to have just caught up to Gallego (Cooper, 2024). The *abc* exit polls show out of 1,817 respondents males being 46% of the data, 48% Democrat and 49% Republican. The women take up 54% of the responses with 52% voting Democrat and 47% Republican. Looking at white (63%) and non-white (37%), show 46% Dem and 53% Rep vs nonwhite votes, 57% Dem and 39% Rep. The record of age (1,810 responses) shows a Republican lean for 30 and above whereas 18-29 (14%) are 71% Dem and 26% Rep. Highest Republican support coming from the 65+. For policies, abortion (1,583 respondents) is voted legal by 65% with 73% Dem and 24% Rep and illegal by

32%, 5% Dem and 94% Rep. Lastly, the confidence in conducting a fair and accurate election (1,498 respondents) say that 66% are confident, 69% Dem and 29% Rep and 33% not confident 13% Dem and 84% Rep.

In the post polling interviews there was a large consensus that Lake was too extreme whereas less people thought that Gallego was too extreme, based on his image he has built as a pragmatic moderate (Cooper, 2024). Gallego was very strategic in how he reframed himself to Arizona as a Senator. He was cautious when talking about his history of progressive voting in congress and often downplayed his progressive intentions; making him more desirable and an adequate representative of Republicans that didn't support Lake (NBCUniversal, 2024). With his moderate approach and his "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" biography he was a suitable option for those swing voters.

Lake received a total of 1,595,761 votes and Trump 1,770,242 votes which means roughly 174,481 or 1:10 Republicans split their ballot and voted for Trump and Gallego. Lake was assumed to have lost a large percentage of Trump's Hispanic following due to comments made in the past, accusing Gallego of letting millions of illegal immigrants cast ballots. There were hesitations about the vote counting after receiving several ballot box bomb threats, which delayed the process and the parties trust in accuracy. Results weren't called until November 11th for the Senate race, compared to the Presidential election being called by the next morning. This Senate race was a curtail save for the Democratic party and the collaboration with Trump's agenda. Arizona's Ruben Gallego is now the first Latino Senator in the history of the United State (Altschuler, 2024).

Post Election Messaging

Ruben Gallego's commencement speech was enduring, he took his victory of being the first Latino US Senator and pride in his experience of being a five-term member of the House. He thanked his supporters and individually recognized groups that led him to victory; his family, veterans, native populations, and Democrats. He addressed his mission to fix the nations broken immigration system, his continual fight for vets, and for all women and their reproductive health. His humility shines when he says, "I will fight as much for the people who did not vote for me as the ones that did" (Cooper, 2024). Kari Lake has stopped short of conceding, but posted a video on X (formerly Twitter) signaling her run was over two days after AP projected Gallego's win. On November 11th Lake posted a two-and-a-half-minute video sending her "message to Arizona." She talks about the memories of her campaign and the great comfort she feels in MAGA. She reassures her policies on boarder control and public safety will be carried out by Republican authority (Lake, 2024). She begins and concludes her message with a bible verse, both talking about persistence and faith in self, and comes closest to admitting defeat when saying, "I can say for certain that the truth will never stop mattering to me, you will never stop mattering to me." (Lake, 2024). As she tiptoed around defeat her video received 3.1 million views and any future communication between Gallego and Lake has been inexistant (Sievers, 2024). This is a predictable reaction for Lake due to the similar circumstances of the 2022 gubernatorial elections. After her loss in 2022 she had a defamation lawsuit filed by Maricopa County recorder, Stephen Richer for her false accusations of fraud and tampering with results (Sievers, 2024). This case lasted for more than a year and was tamed at the beginning of her campaign this year (Sievers, 2024). To this day she still hasn't conceded her gubernatorial loss and continues to suggest foul play.

Lossing party, moving forward

The Republican party is moving forward in all other branches of government. They have obtained the government trifecta and are projected to maintain their authority for at least Trump's term. As for Kari Lake, she should adjust her performative attitudes. She lost a lot of her following due to her efforts of adopting Trump's persona. Her mission to "Trumpaign" (Altschuler, 2024) wasn't as arousing as Donald himself. Her attempts to rile the crowd and erupt the MAGA energy was not as well received as Trump's charisma. She focused heavily on "attack ads" (Perloff, 2022), against Gallego, and publicizing emotionally charged information and accusations. Her collaboration with Trump made her more vulgar in her accusations, like in the campaign ad cited earlier, Trump personally attacks Gallego through an endorsement ad for Kari Lake. She insulted the Latino/Hispanic communities of Arizona enough to have lost her support from those voting for Trump and pivoting to support Gallego.

Lake's approach to the media could be a bit more individualistic, her extreme political passion is fired by Trump but her efforts to be a replica and "Trump in heels" has cost her yet another election. Gender plays an important role in understanding her defeat, it's proof that when females mimic behaviors they are received differently, and often more negatively compared to when men act the same way. The fact that she is a woman isn't why she lost, it is more in the attempts to create a feminized Trump she lost sight of what was necessary in attracting her Arizona audience. Her performing side, from her anchoring days, hasn't perished. She gained following through her instructiveness and ability to entertain (Perloff, 2022, 283). Her audience followed her with prior enthusiasm from her time on the news and shaping her to be a political performer like Trump. Lake's struggles of individuality also are examined in Harris' loss. She was unable to detach herself from Biden enough to show that there were distinctions in their leadership. Though Lake wanted to follow Trump's policy to a tee, she wanted to represent the Arizonian people.

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