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Book review: Quotas for women and politics. Gender and candidate selection reform worldwide

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hierarchy his definition may give him more leverage for integrating 'groupless' issues within the broader framework provided for issues that have well-defined groups. Although Karol does little to leverage his innovative definition of groups to explore issues he defines as 'groupless', such theoretical development would be especially interesting because it might help explain some of the change in particular elite's views and thus supplement our understanding of how support for issues develops as groups evolve from informal and intense collections of the self-aware to the well-organized (and intense) ones that serve as the basis for most of the issues he examines in the book. Given that a cursory glance at his case studies suggests that the existence of formal groups serves to provide the system with substantial stability – position change occurs much more quickly and frequently on 'groupless' issues – Karol might have the makings of his next book here.

In sum, *Party Position Change in American Politics* is a cogent and essential new account of American party politics that provides us with a more complete understanding of how, when and why parties take and change positions. David Karol's rich theoretical explanation, combined with his careful and lucid historical and case study analyses, makes for one of the most important books written on American politics in recent years. Karol's vivid writing makes the book accessible for both undergraduates and graduate students, the latter of whom will almost certainly be required to read it for years to come.

Mona Lena Krook

Quotas for women and politics. Gender and candidate selection reform worldwide.
New York: Oxford University Press. (2009) \$49.95 (hbk); \$24.95 (pbk), xi + 290 pp.
ISBN (hbk) 9780195375671; 019537567X; ISBN (pbk) 9780199740277; 0199740275.

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Quotas for the selection of women to public office have been adopted by legislatures and political parties in more than one hundred countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Western and Eastern Europe, Latin America, North America and Australia. Krook's research monograph *Quotas for Women and Politics* is the first to treat quotas for women (i.e. reserved seats, party quotas and legislative quotas) as a global phenomenon, which means that the book focuses on development of a common framework for understanding the origins and impact of gender quotas.

The book is organized in seven chapters. After an introductory chapter, the second deals with quota adoption: Why are quotas adopted? Which actors are involved in quota debates and campaigns, and why do they support or oppose gender quotas? Starting from a careful reading of a wealth of single country/single region studies on quotas, Krook distinguishes four main explanatory accounts regarding quota adoption. Existing accounts on quota adoption contend that quotas are adopted: when individual women and women's groups mobilize for them; when political elites embrace quotas for strategic reasons; when they mesh with existing notions of equality and representation; and when

they are supported by international norms and spread through transnational sharing. Krook concludes that while these arguments are indeed supported by many case studies, they are often contradicted and overlooked by others. To devise a more general framework for analysing quota adoption, these explanations are disaggregated into a series of 'tools' to explain quota adoption – a list of three sets of actors and seven motivations. They are considered to be parts of the explanation that operate 'within the wider universe of quota debates'.

The twofold advantage of applying this template is that it requires scholars to take all actors and motivation into account that they might otherwise overlook and enhances informed comparisons to establish specificities and similarities between the quotas studied and the wider universe of quota campaigns. Most importantly, the framework would enhance insight into alliances leading to the adoption of gender quotas. Indeed, rather than a search for a universal explanation, Krook adheres to the causal diversity approach, i.e. the idea that there exist plural trajectories of quota reform ('equifinality'). Chapter 2 briefly discusses a few combinations of actors and motivations. The main conclusions regarding quota adoption are that, indeed, key actors vary widely and that feminist, non-feminist, normative as well as strategic reasons, play significant roles in processes of quota adoption.

The third chapter discusses the implementation of gender quotas. What impact do quotas have on patterns of political representation? Are quota provisions sufficient for bringing more women into politics? Or, do their effects depend on other features of the broader political context? In order to discover how much 'work' quotas actually do, acknowledging the importance of the electoral system, women's societal status and cultural attitudes, Krook develops an alternative framework of candidate selection. She distinguishes three 'gendered institutions': systemic institutions (the formal features of the political system); practical institutions (the formal and informal practices that shape political behaviour); and normative institutions (the formal and informal principles that guide and justify the means and goals in politics). Distinct quota types reform specific institutions: reserved seats alter systemic institutions; party quotas change practical institutions; and legislative quotas reframe normative institutions. Nevertheless, although, for instance, legislative quotas aim at changing normative institutions, they might affect the institutional configuration as a whole, which produces, in turn, dynamics that facilitate or undermine the transformation of women's political representation.

These dynamics are illustrated in chapters four, five and six containing paired comparisons of quota implementation in Pakistan and India; Sweden and the UK; and Argentina and France. These detailed and informative accounts highlight the potential of thinking in terms of 'multiple paths to the same outcome': it is causal configurations rather than single factors that explain success or failure of quotas. Their effect depends on how they interact with the political environment. More precisely, systemic, practical and normative change needs to match in order for quotas to be effective. This implies a process featuring 'harmonizing sequences', that is, actions that lead the three categories of institutions to fit together increasingly over time. 'Disjointed sequences', in contrast, lead to clashes that undermine efforts to promote change. However, harmonizing and competing dynamics are sometimes unintentional, which limits the predictive and prescribing strength of the framework. Nevertheless, the revised framework of candidate

selection and the concept of institutional configurational reform are surely important pieces of theory building on quota implementation and a valuable tool for future single case and comparative studies.

The book is highly readable (though sometimes a little repetitive) and accessible for students, but is at the same time innovative and hence a must for specialists in the field of women's representation, especially gender quotas. The frameworks for analysis, the rich data-paired case studies and the appendices on different types of quotas worldwide will be of interest to them. The book is also of importance for neo-institutionalists and methodologists interested in the 'middle range' approach that marries the advantages of large and small 'n' analysis and enables cross- and within-case comparisons. It goes without saying that this research is of great interest to electoral reform scholars, although Krook could have facilitated this engagement. She frames quotas foremost as a reform of candidate selection and not as electoral reform. Somewhat disappointing is the limitation of representation to numerical, descriptive representation; other dimensions of representation (e.g. symbolic or substantive) are left untouched. But rather than being fundamental critiques, these remarks point to the potential of this innovative and encompassing account for future studies on gender quotas, electoral systems and political representation.

Tim Bale

The conservative party: From Thatcher to Cameron. Cambridge: Polity Press. (2010)
£25.00 (hbk), 504 pp. ISBN 9780745648576.

Reviewed by: David Seawright, University of Leeds, UK
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This book is a wonderful insightful account of the British Conservative Party from the denouement of Margaret Thatcher's leadership in 1989–90 through to the ascent of David Cameron; who was finally, in 2010, able to achieve the electoral success at Westminster which had so eluded the party since 1992. Written in a clear and witty style (not the least of which is to be found in the epigrammatic subheadings of each chapter), but comprised of a clear and cogent critical narrative, it proceeds chronologically to examine the level of success and (mostly) failure of the party under the leadership of: John Major (elected by MPs), William Hague (by MPs), Iain Duncan Smith (by members), Michael Howard (by magic circle emergence) and David Cameron (by members).

This is important, as Bale clearly shows just how crucial the position of the leader continues to be in any analysis of the political culture of the party. In effect, for the party, a change of leader is a change of 'regime' but such a concentration of power is still very much contingent upon electoral success and, although within reason 'a winner' may have carte-blanche, a loser 'will still be "everything" – but not, perhaps, for very long'. It is pointed out that such a personal culpability approach can be de-stabilizing for the party as it can prevent serious in-depth thinking,