

on presidential leverage; and Kelly, Marshall, and Watts on signing statements), and ‘bully pulpit’ communicator (Kasop and Goldzwig on counterterrorism policy; and Azari on electoral mandates). Unfortunately, these roles are not explicitly interrogated at any point, nor developed enough to help identify meaningful connections among chapters. Additionally, and more problematically, some of the chapters do not explicitly draw out the implications of their conclusions for our understanding of the presidential leadership dilemma. Despite these concerns regarding the overall coherence of the project, the quality case studies and interesting questions they raise about presidential leadership still make this volume worth reading.

The book’s most valuable contribution to presidential studies literature is its identification and development of ‘the presidential leadership dilemma’ as an analytical concept. Azari, Brown, and Nwokora capture an idea that seems to have been hiding just below the surface for many scholars of the presidency and make a worthwhile effort to put it to good use. By juxtaposing the demands of the party with those of the nation, the concept of the presidential leadership dilemma can account for seemingly paradoxical presidential behavior, such the story of Obama agreeing to extend the Bush-era tax cuts despite fierce resistance from Democrats, with which the book begins. Additionally, the editors’ success in situating the concept within the seminal literature on the American presidency is instructive; both for scholars who wish to apply it in their own research and for students who are new to the field.

Susan Franceschet, Mona Lena Krook and Jennifer Piscopo (eds) *The impact of gender quotas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012; ISBN: 9780199830084, \$31.95 (pbk)

Miki Caul Kittilson and Leslie Schwindt-Bayer, *The gendered effects of electoral institutions: Political engagement and participation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012; ISBN: 9780199608607, \$99.00 (hbk)

**Reviewed by:** Karen Celis, *Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium*

It is widely recognized that *institutions matter*. The specific contribution of both of these books on the gendered impact of electoral institutions is that they greatly expand our understanding of *why and how they matter*, also in unintended and indirect ways. These books are hence of concern for all scholars interested in the power of electoral engineering and institutional change to increase the efficiency and legitimacy of the democratic system. Both studies furthermore apply a mix of advanced qualitative and/or quantitative methods and adopt a wide territorial scope. The publications gather excellent and innovative gender and politics scholars and engage

This volume’s most valuable contribution to the field, interestingly, is also its most significant missed opportunity. The contributors to this book draw upon the analytical concept of the presidential leadership dilemma to explore the leadership challenges that Presidents face and, in particular, how they ‘maneuver in response to these pressures’ (p. 3) and ‘reconcile the demands of national and partisan leadership’ (p. 4). Apart from the problematic assumption that Presidents only react to their contextual conditions, rather than create them (see: David Zarefsky on defining political reality), the primary missed opportunity is in not applying the presidential leadership dilemma as a *critical* analytical concept. There are few who would disagree that, in this era of political/governmental crisis in the United States, Congress is not the only institution that is ‘broken.’ It has been almost 30 years since Theodore Lowi diagnosed the presidency as pathological, and the continued mediatization of politics, celebrityization/demonization of presidents, and disillusionment of the American people have only exacerbated the situation. By including political parties in their theorizing, Azari, Brown, and Nwokora have reconceived this pathology in an incredibly insightful way. They need only acknowledge it. In their conclusion, they argue that, ‘for presidents, the leadership dilemma is not one to be resolved but rather one to be acutely understood and constantly navigated’ (p. 220). Perhaps. But for scholars of the presidency, it is a dilemma that we must not only acutely understand, but one that we should identify as a serious problem as well.

with the most salient debates about gendered patterns of participation and representation.

In contrast to most research on the gender gap in political engagement and participation that has focussed on cultural and structural resource-driven explanations, *The Gendered Effects of Electoral Institutions* is set out to explain cross-country variation in gender gaps in political engagement and participation by electoral institutions and their actual outcomes. It indeed shows that electoral institutions have different effects on women’s and men’s political involvement – which, in turn, is critical for understanding gender inequality in politics worldwide. They play a significant role in reducing the gender gap by drawing women into the democratic process.

The book offers an encompassing literature review on the gender gap in political involvement. It presents cross-national statistical analyses of the 2000 wave of the World Values Survey and the second module of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Survey. These cross-country comparative analyses are complemented by four case studies that investigate the causal effect of change in institutions on political attitudes and behaviour. The four cases – New Zealand, Russia, France and Uruguay – have all

altered their electoral institutions, allowing for pre- and post-reform comparisons.

The central hypothesis is that electoral rules that promote political inclusion have a larger effect on women's political engagement (like political interest, political discussion, following politics in the news) and participation (like voting, lobbying, protesting, campaigning, persuading others to vote in a particular way) as compared to men's. The introduction of inclusive electoral rules is expected to close the gender gap for both rational and symbolic reasons. First, more inclusive electoral rules might operate as rational incentives for political parties to mobilize 'undertapped markets' like women. Second, inclusive electoral systems as symbols of countries' commitments to gender equality and women's involvement might actually enhance women's political engagement and participation. Furthermore, inclusive electoral institutions might themselves reduce gender gaps in political engagement and participation in a direct fashion or indirectly, that is, depending on the level of inclusive political outcomes they produce.

The cross-country analyses show how votes proportionally translated into legislative seats, followed by gender quotas, are the most powerful and consistent explanations for the gender gaps. Other aspects like district magnitude, the effective number of parties and the representation of women all explain some variation in gender gaps in certain aspects of *political engagement*, but electoral proportionality is by far the most important and persistent explanation in all forms of engagement. With regard to political engagement, gender quotas however play a minimal role and, surprisingly, also a negative one. They diminish the gender gap in political interest, but not by drawing women in but by reducing men's probability of being interested in politics. Electoral proportionality and also quotas drive the explanation for the variation in gender gaps in *political participation*, especially for the higher cost activities such as contacting politicians, persuading others and working on a campaign.

The findings regarding the importance of proportionality are confirmed by the case studies on New Zealand and Russia. The case studies on France and Uruguay further nuance and qualify the importance of gender quotas. Since the adoption of the parity law in 2000, France has witnessed no decrease in gender gaps in political interest, discussion and voting, and no or no significant positive effect of gender quotas could be reported in Uruguay that has implemented gender quotas since 2009. According to the authors, one of the plausible explanations is that gender quotas are simply not designed to have a wider impact beyond the numbers of elected women.

The far reaching and longer-term effects of quotas are, in contrast, precisely the jump off point of *The Impact of Gender Quotas*. This book also presents contradictory findings concerning whether or not gender quotas increase women's political engagement. Nevertheless, the volume

presents abundant proof that gender quotas do combat rather than perpetuate existing patterns of gender equality in a variety of political dimensions, and shows that quotas have greater impact than just increasing levels of women's descriptive representation. The book presents in-depth case study research based in Western Europe, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and the Middle East on how gender quotas shape patterns of descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation. It also contains a very helpful overview of the scholarship on gender quotas adoption, political representation and how gender quotas affect the women elected, their actions and constituents' responses.

In order to further the discipline – and especially the 'second generation' of gender quotas research that moves beyond counting women – the book establishes definitions for theorizing and operationalizing the impact of quotas on the descriptive, substantive and symbolic dimensions of political representation. Also to that end, it deals with methodological challenges such as the distinction between the effect of quotas versus the effect of the presence of women, and the time dimension (that is, the effects of quotas varying over time as successive generations of women enter politics and citizens get used to the presence of female leaders). Another innovative feature of the book is that it explicitly engages with the arguments of the opponents of gender quotas by testing the empirical validity of their claims, such as that gender quotas would facilitate access for unqualified women, reinforce stereotypes about women politicians being inferior to men and spur negative expectations about 'quota women'.

The first part of the book on descriptive representation tackles such questions about gender quotas, merit and qualifications. The difference between elected men and women suggests that gender quotas indeed help women to overcome barriers, and that there exist differences in career patterns while, at the same time, their level of productivity or experience proves that they are not less qualified. The second part on substantive representation deals with questions about expectations of women representing women as a group and experiences of being labelled as 'quota women'. Label effects diminish over time, but do indeed devalue women's legislative work. Female legislators' focus on representing women's interests undermines their legislative success, thereby also decreasing opportunities for establishing women-friendly legislation. Also worrying are the findings that governments hide behind quotas while hindering female MPs' attempts to advance women's rights, ignore the women's rights agenda or do not provide the personal and political security necessary to advocate for women's rights. The third section on symbolic representation looks at how gender quotas impact on how citizens feel about government. Quotas indeed alter citizens' beliefs that women are capable leaders; which, however, does not automatically imply more positive attitudes towards women more generally, or a more equal sharing of domestic work, for instance.

Both books have great merit and push the discipline forward, but could, however, have more strongly engaged with two salient issues. The first concerns intersectionality, that is, the recognition that one's identity and structural position in society is never constituted on the basis of, for example, one's gender alone, but always by the combination and interaction of gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, ability and other axes of difference. *The Gendered Effects of Electoral Institutions* in particular hardly distinguished between groups of women, for instance ethnic majority versus ethnic minority women or highly educated versus lower educated women. It is nevertheless evident

that different groups of women feature varying levels of political engagement and participation, and that, by consequence, electoral institutions might play out differently. The second remark especially addresses *The Impact of Gender Quotas*. Although symbolic representation is broadly defined as how female leaders are perceived by the public and how exposure to female leaders impacts on the political engagement of female constituents, the bigger question remains whether gender quotas are helpful in curing the democratic deficit by closing the gap between citizens and politics: do they produce higher levels of legitimacy and do (female) citizens feel better represented?

Florence Faucher-King and Patrick Le Galès, *The new labour experiment: Change and reform under Blair and Brown*, Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA, 2010; xv + 183 pp.: ISBN 978-0-8047-6235.

Judi Atkins, *Justifying new labour policy*, Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2011; xi + 211 pp.: ISBN 978-0-230-27911-7.

**Reviewed by:** Sarah Hale, *University of Sheffield - Western Bank, UK*

British New Labour may be officially dead and buried, but it seems that it will be a while before it is allowed to rest in peace. For the time being, there are plenty of people keen to disinter it and pick over the remains. These two books are aimed at very different audiences, and have very different starting points, one being a broad overview of the New Labour years, the other using it as a case study for a new approach to analysing the way policy is justified.

*The New Labour Experiment: Change and Reform under Blair and Brown* emerges from researchers at elite French institutions. Presumably written for a French/European audience, it has been translated for a US one. Despite its claims to offer a new interpretation of the New Labour years, readers hoping for unique insights from an outsider's view of British politics will be disappointed, as this is little more than a skimming of the surface of what most readers with an existing interest in the subject would already know, while for readers coming to the subject without any previous knowledge there is insufficient background information (for example, about the nature of the trade union movement and its relationship to the Labour Party) given for this to serve as an introduction to New Labour. It is hard, really, to discern what the target market for this work is.

The pre-publication reviews quoted on the cover describe the book as 'a masterful and pitiless account of the dark side of New Labour' and as 'a balanced assessment of the Blair ... years.' It cannot be both; in fact it is neither. As an assessment of New Labour policies and their outcomes it is woefully light on facts and figures and thus

cannot compete with Toynbee and Walker's (2001, 2005, 2010) audits of the Blair and Brown governments. Faucher-King and Le Galès' account is largely descriptive, with little in the way of analysis. Where they do assert conclusions about the outcomes of New Labour policy, these are frequently presented without any evidence or reasoning that might have supported them.

More worryingly still, the book contains a number of errors of fact that have remained uncorrected (or been introduced) in the translation. For example, the authors claim that 'The weaknesses of British transport infrastructure remain spectacular, and road congestion is the worst in Europe. The government chose to multiply tolls to restrict traffic, rather than to invest. It came up against significant mobilizations in protest as a result' (p. 39). This bears little relation to any reality experienced by someone living in Britain, let alone studying British politics, during this period. 'Best Value' becomes 'Best Value for Money' (p. 50), Jobcentre Plus becomes 'JobPlus' (p. 30), the GMB (General, Municipal and Boilermakers Union) becomes 'Britain's General Union' (p. 93), and Quango is consistently (examples may be found on p. 45 and p. 118 among others) rendered as 'Quasi Non-Governmental Organisation' rather than Quasi *Autonomous* Non-Governmental Organisation, a confusion which is not insignificant. Most egregiously of all, they state that Herbert Morrison was a leader of the Labour Party (p. 12)!

To compound this, large parts of the book read like a (not very good) translation exercise. It is clear that the translator has little knowledge of British politics or idiom; in places it is hard to believe that they are even a native English speaker. There are examples of infelicitous phrasing and clunking construction on almost every page.

This work does not, however, merely claim to be an overview of New Labour, but a new 'interpretation that insists on the composite and original character of the model' based not on the ideology but on the actions and policies of the New Labour governments, and their impact on British society, '... to clarify the contours of the New Labour project, deemed complex by commentators, and