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Books Reviewed

Dahlerup, Drude, ed. (2006). *Women, Quotas and Politics*. London and New York: Routledge.

Caul Kittilson, Miki (2006). *Challenging Parties, Changing Parliaments: Women and Elected Office in Contemporary Western Europe*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Lovenduski, Joni, ed. (2005). *State Feminism and Political Representation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mateo Diaz, Mercedes (2005). *Representing Women? Female Legislators in West European Parliaments*. Colchester: ECPR Press.

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Representation is a core concept in the study and practice of politics. In unpacking its meaning, a useful starting point is to consider it as consisting of three distinct, interrelated dimensions. It is about *who* represents, *what* is represented, and *how* it is represented. The context of formal politics (voters, parties, elections, and legislators) provides the usual background for a discussion of one or more elements of representation. More recently, these aspects of representation have been applied when considering the role of nonelected interests in the political arena. This review considers the contribution to current understanding of gender and representation offered by four new books on the subject.

Who is involved in claiming to represent gender, and specifically women's interests, in the political arena? There is growing evidence to indicate that female representatives in particular, although not exclusively, have been found to identify with promoting a more gender-equal society. Some have the political space and power actively to articulate and pursue this issue – as government ministers, political leaders, and a significant proportion of the legislature. This

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condition is not typical, however, and the global level of women's parliamentary representation, at 17 percent, indicates that in many regions of the world women struggle to gain political inclusion.

The theme of representation and its gendered nature runs through each publication. Caul Kittilson looks at the role of political parties in bringing women to elected office in Western Europe. Mateo Diaz also takes contemporary Western Europe as the setting in which to explore women's political representation in both descriptive and substantive terms. The collection of essays edited by Lovenduski shines a spotlight on the institutional political arrangements (specifically, state feminist agencies) that represent women's interests in a policy context. The volume edited by Dahlerup takes a global perspective on women's representation through a detailed study of the use of quotas as a means of enhancing women's parliamentary presence. All are informed by the normative view that women's presence in national legislatures and in political decision-making arenas is "essential to the quality of the democratic process" (Caul Kittilson: 13).

Taken together, these studies provide a wealth of insights into the current state of gender and political representation, enhancing empirical and theoretical knowledge in the field. They also illustrate methodological developments in this area of scholarship. The familiar issues of women's representation (the "why so few?" conundrum and the vexed question of women parliamentarians making a difference to the political agenda) are given a new cast by Caul Kittilson and Mateo Diaz in their respective rigorously constructed and empirical comparative studies. The Lovenduski and Dahlerup collections push well beyond the standard questions, addressing obstacles to women's political representation to country and regional studies of the process of representing gender interests. Lovenduski's collection breaks new ground with an examination of state feminist agencies and their capacity to effect a feminist political agenda. In the Dahlerup volume, in-depth regional comparative studies trace the adoption of gender quotas for political office. These differing approaches attest to the vibrancy of scholarship in the field and the multiplicity of methodological perspectives now being employed to examine the gendered nature of representation.

Miki Caul Kittilson examines women's inclusion in party and parliamentary politics in ten Western European countries across a two-decade time span (1975–97). She charts the increase of women in parliament over this period, focusing on parties rather than national trends. She critiques "supply-side" explanations for women's low representation in modern Europe, placing an emphasis on the gatekeeping role of parties and the extent to which they facilitate or impede women's parliamentary opportunities. She argues that increases in women's representation came about through women taking advantage of favorable conditions within parties to devise and require implementation of "context-contingent strategies for inclusion" (Caul Kittilson: 2) such as quotas.

This is not a new perspective. Indeed, Joni Lovenduski and Pippa Norris first placed a spotlight on political parties and women's representation in their 1993 collection *Gender and Party Politics*. This volume was the first to foreground the gatekeeping role of parties in defining women's electoral opportunities. Nonetheless, Caul Kittilson's volume advances this important dimension of representation by subjecting women's presence on 50 party national executives to robust statistical analysis. She demonstrates a strong connection between the proportion of women on a party's national executive and the proportion of women in parliament – an

aspect of representation and party change not generally explored in the gender and politics literature.

The question of why there is an increased presence of women in parliament from some parties and not others is answered in one simple word – quotas. However, Caul Kittilson does not take this as the final word on the matter. She unpacks the circumstances that create an environment within a party supportive of the adoption of quotas and finds that three conditions are more significant than others: a high level of women among the party elites, a contagion or diffusion effect across parties, and the fact that leftist parties adopt quotas sooner than parties from other ideological perspectives. However, this leaves her with a causal chain problem: is a substantial presence of women in the party leadership conducive to the adoption of quotas, which leads to an increased presence of women in political office, or is it necessary to have quotas in place first before women can enjoy an enhanced presence at the top of party hierarchies and in parliament? She concludes that quotas are a necessary precondition for women to receive a boost to their representation on a party's national executive. She also finds that when women constitute about 20 percent of a party's national executive, women's presence in parliament also increases, even in the absence of a candidate gender quota. This finding is one that invites detailed case-study scrutiny, and Caul Kittilson provides this for three countries: the United Kingdom, Germany, and Finland.

A reader familiar with gender politics in Europe will find that the case studies provide a relatively standard account of quota adoption in each instance. Concise and easily read, this section of the book provides a good grounding in the dynamics of parties and gender to an audience that is not well acquainted with European literature on this subject. The subsequent chapter teases out various explanations for the increase in women's political representation over time, and in doing so brings the book back to contributing new knowledge on women and politics. Caul Kittilson identifies three persistent variables influencing women's parliamentary presence: an increase in women voters supporting a party, women having a strong presence on a party's national executive, and a centralized party structure. Thus, she demonstrates that a three-dimensional dynamic uniting top-down and bottom-up forces for change boosts women's presence among a party's MPs. A New Left ideological tendency and quotas are factors facilitating these changes.

The isolation of these contributors to creating a sustainable environment for a growth in women's political presence resonates with much of the literature in the field. Some of her other multivariate model findings, however, are open to further testing. The effects of proportional representation electoral systems do not register as being important explanations in accounting for increases in women's political representation over time. Yet, as the wider literature shows, political women have spent considerable time in shaping electoral systems to provide better opportunities for women – strategies such as alternating women and men on party lists, for instance, have had a significant impact on the presence of women MPs. Although this "zipping" strategy could be considered a form of quota, it nonetheless is part of the electoral rules, and, in closed list systems, could be seen to negate the need for a bonus of votes from women in order to achieve gender change in representation.

Challenging Parties, Changing Parliaments is written with an American audience in mind, given the extensive referencing of American literature. Though a valid perspective, and with many interesting insights to offer to gender and representation, the absence of a discussion of European-focused research keeps the study rather too close to analytical perspectives drawn from studies of US politics. It also suggests that research findings from studies of women and the American political process can be transposed with equal relevance into the more complex European political environment. From the brief point on electoral systems above, it is clear that such an unproblematic transposition cannot be assumed. Importantly, though, parties are shown to be permeable structures: they do respond to demands for change, given the right conditions. The importance of this book is that it returns a focus to political parties and processes of change within parties in advancing women's claims for representation.

Caul Kittilson's book identifies party quotas as an important contributor to changes in women's political representation in Western Europe. Drude Dahlerup's collection treats quotas in more detail as a process of change and a facilitator for women's political inclusion. The *Women, Quotas and Politics* volume provides a worldwide comparative analysis of the introduction and implementation of gender quotas. The Dahlerup book investigates the effects, on a country by country basis, of the increasing use of quotas, legislated and voluntary, on a global scale in recent decades. The book poses a series of research questions based on the effect of quotas on the numbers of women in politics, the empowerment of political women, the role of the international community, and the impact of quotas on women's relationship with society and the state. As a collection of essays, it does not have the easy flow and consistent focus of a single-authored volume such as that of Caul Kittilson. Nonetheless, the authors stay true to the research questions in the main, and the result is a rich study of the diverse adoption and implementation of gender quotas in political and cultural contexts that vary from being openly supportive of gender equality to being strongly opposed to women having a role in the public sphere.

Dahlerup's introductory chapter provides the analytical framework for the succeeding contributions, beginning with an outline of recent debates on women's political representation. She points out that the discourse embedded in these debates seeks to shift the problem of under-representation from individual women to the political institutions (including parties), with inclusion and gender-equal representation as primary concerns. As a strategy for inclusion and equality, gender quotas seek to go further than providing equality of opportunity for political women with men: they are intended to address the gender outcome of a political event (voting). This makes the quota an instrument designed to deliver equality in the gender result (Dahlerup: 9). While scholarly interest generally highlights the active social and political debates that accompany the introduction of quotas, the implementation of quota provisions is not given similar attention. The chapters in this book fill that gap.

The findings from quota studies also question some of the long-held understandings of the conditions affecting women's political representation – women's standards of education and levels of employment, the degree of religiosity prevalent in society, the period of women's enfranchisement, and the nature of the electoral system being the most commonly cited. One of the strengths of this book is its exploration of the diverse nature of quotas, ranging from voluntarily

adopted party rules on the sex balance of potential candidates (as found in Nordic countries) to legally binding reserved seats for women in parliament (Rwanda and Afghanistan). It shows that there are regional variations in the adoption of particular forms of quotas, with western liberal democracies resistant to legislating for quotas while Latin American states readily legalize quotas and Arab states utilize seat-reservation strategies. It also very usefully points out that quotas are not a new political phenomenon. They can exist in political systems in a different guise, such as the disproportional representation of geographical areas in a national parliament. At other times they are obvious supports for bolstering the representation of ethnic or religious groups (Jordan, Lebanon, and India).

The theoretical arguments for and against quotas are explored in an essay by Carol Bacchi. Ranging over the canon of feminist theory on political representation, Bacchi analyzes common debates on quotas, such as the charge that quotas subvert the merit standard, and claims founded on rights of citizenship, which often get caught up in binary discussions of equal versus different and of paid labor versus women's work in the home. She also addresses a core issue in representation theory (that is, who represents?) and explores the arguments in feminist theory on increasing women's representation. Whether women constitute a group with distinctive interests, as Anne Phillips (1995) argues, or whether Iris Marion Young's (2002) looser concept of "perspectives" is more applicable, ultimately depends on the context in which the debate takes place (Dahlerup: 44–6). This insightful discussion of quota-related theories is also an excellent reprise of representation and the place of women within the representational world that complements, and indeed enhances, the other three volumes discussed in this review.

The following chapters adopt a regional focus. This perspective allows for a comparative discussion within a common context. The device brings a wealth of detail to bear on *who* represents, and charts women's mobilization around the issue of inclusion in parliament. Distinctive features emerge in all global regions. In the Nordic case, it is found that quotas have had a limited role in increasing women's representation, as significant progress had already been made by the time the quota debate became relevant. The important contributors to women's high parliamentary representation came from a combination of socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional factors interacting with women's mobilization and party activism. Thus, the Nordic experience of increasing women's parliamentary presence is underpinned by an incrementally rising trajectory based on favorable sociopolitical conditions. Although the adoption of quotas changed the debate on women's representation with a critique of incrementalism, voluntary party-based quota strategies served to "top up" already high levels of women's representation. The authors conclude that "quota provisions in the Nordic countries in practice have proved to be a continuation of Nordic incrementalism rather than a break with the past" (Dahlerup: 78–9).

The Latin American experience provides a contrast with the Nordic model in two major respects: the time frame of women's representation is concentrated within two decades (1980 to the present), whereas it was a relatively continuous feature of Nordic political discussion; Latin American quotas are invariably, although not exclusively, legislated, while Nordic quotas are voluntary. Again, context is very significant, as the redemocratization of the region from the 1980s onward provided opportunities for the women's movement to press its claims

for representation as a right of citizenship. The study highlights an important consideration in the implementation of quotas, that of a judiciary prepared to clarify and enforce the quota law, which also speaks to the potential weakness of parties and culture in enabling women to participate to the full in these democratic states.

The high presence of women in the parliaments of sub-Saharan Africa illustrates the potential for women's inclusion in newly constituting political institutions. More specifically, these new political arrangements arose from the ending of civil conflict, and, as such, the old political order was overwritten by a new set of governing arrangements. In this context, the issue of gender representation advanced by women's groups became part of the negotiations shaping political institutions. Obvious, too, is the "contagion" effect prompted in part by regional organizations pushing for the adoption of gender quotas. In putting new political institutions in place, the preferred quota is that of constitutionally mandated reserved seats in parliament (Rwanda, Uganda, Eritrea, and Tanzania) or in the executive (Kenya and Swaziland), indicating a concern to guarantee the gendered outcome of electoral processes. While voluntary party quotas have been adopted in many other countries of the region, including South Africa, the authors suggest that this strategy for achieving a gender-balanced parliament is less reliable than the reserved-seat method. On the other hand, reserved seats pose other challenges. For one, once the complement of reserved seats is filled, there is no particular pressure on parties to encourage women to win in non-reserved contests. On a more positive note, the experience of contesting reserved seats has given Ugandan political women the confidence to contest in open electoral contests. Importantly, too, reserved seats challenge the perception that politics is a male-only activity, making it acceptable for women to be seen as representatives. At the same time, there is a warning note about the manipulation of women occupying reserved seats by undemocratic political leaders, as instanced in Uganda and Rwanda, where "women's potential to make a genuine difference remains restricted" (Dahlerup: 136).

The Balkans is another region emerging from conflict and transitioning to democracy and presents a contrast in trajectory of women's political inclusion and representation to that of sub-Saharan Africa. Although some of the contextual conditions in both regions are similar (patriarchal political cultures, poor or nonexistent national gender-equality institutions, unstable party systems, and male-dominated political elites), the path to representation for women in the Balkans was more fraught. This is in part due to a weak women's movement in the region, and resistance in political discourse to quotas as a means of boosting women's political inclusion. As democracy-building progressed, gender equality in politics became a more salient issue, through a coalition of international support and local activism. Although women's presence in parliament is less than 30 percent, there is evidence that elected women promote gender-equality and equal-opportunities issues, providing support for Caul Kittilson's and Mateo Diaz's contention that when women hold about one-fifth of parliamentary seats, the political agenda expands to include the issues advanced by female MPs. There is ample evidence in this region of a shifting discourse on gender equality, from resistance to acceptance, in the decade or so after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The pervasiveness of gender quotas in the Arab world stands in contrast to the experience of the Balkans, and is more similar to that in Latin America.

The overarching ideology shaping women's political representation is, of course, the Islamic culture and context. Tribal affiliations too are significant in shaping social loyalties, and contribute to the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes of gender roles (Dahlerup: 186). The poor economic conditions prevalent in the majority of Arab states (with the exception of the Gulf states) combine to keep women out of political as well as economic life (Dahlerup: 185). Women who enter parliament through a quota are not accorded the same political legitimacy and respect as their male colleagues. They are seen as second-rate politicians, "clients" of the state on whom they depend for their seat-holding. In the Arab context, the inclusion of women in politics requires action on multiple fronts: acclimatizing societies in the region to seeing and accepting women as decision-makers, empowering women MPs to see themselves as representatives of their society, and raising awareness of gender equality throughout society while implementing quotas to boost women's political visibility (Dahlerup: 188–9). As the authors note, without quotas women would not have had a foothold in the political arena. Although the chapter ends with the optimistic observation that quotas can support changes in traditional attitudes toward women's role, this places a considerable burden on the quota as a mechanism, and on the women who occupy office through the quota route. The chapter in all illuminates the considerable distance Arab cultures must travel to accept women as political representatives.

Controversy surrounds the use of quotas, no matter where they are used as a means of boosting women's representation, despite the acceptance of quotas for supporting representation of other social and cultural identities. In a discussion of the adoption and implementation of quotas in western liberal democracies, Mona Lena Krook and her co-authors provide a useful analytical lens with which to understand why parties or countries adopt one form of quota over another. They link the nature of the preferred quota with the predominant model of citizenship of a country. Liberal citizenship models, characterized by an emphasis on individualism, often have majoritarian electoral and two-party systems and are predisposed to adopting "soft" quotas and voluntary party quotas. Republican citizenship privileges universalism, supports a centralized democracy, and is open to adopting legal quotas. Consociational and corporatist citizenship paradigms are characterized by consensus and social partnership, proportional representation, and a tendency to adopt party quotas and, occasionally, legal quotas (Dahlerup: 196–7). Each model also frames the discourse around quotas, and women's representation in general, with liberal models giving voice to discussions on the definition of equality, republican citizenship focusing on the nature of political representation, and consociational frameworks debating gender as a political identity (Dahlerup: 196–7). This typology is applied to specific cases: Germany, the UK, and Australia (all with party quotas); Belgium and France (legal quotas); and New Zealand and the USA (soft quotas). In so doing, the opportunities and constraints for quota adoption within these three citizenship models is explored. The theoretical contribution of this chapter invites testing in other world regions to see if the models and their associated framing of quota debates are universally applicable.

The link between quotas and citizenship is also made in the chapter dealing with the South Asian region. It shares a similarity with the Balkans chapter in identifying the role of international institutions and the global women's movement working with national women's groups in seeking to establish quotas

for women's political representation. Country political factors also influence the adoption of quotas: "changes in the nature of state politics as well as the shifting position of party and factional groups within national politics" (Dahlerup: 239). The complex interaction of local government quotas with the political systems of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh suggest that a representation quota does not necessarily address issues of gender inequality, nor enhance the legitimacy of representative institutions. Thus while quotas are adopted as a strategy for advancing women's political involvement, it does not follow that women, gender relations, or the status of the political institutions are affected or changed in a positive way. This chapter points, as do others, to the fact that there are limits to what one can expect quotas to deliver. There is some indication, however, that the operation of quotas in this region has some impact on women's empowerment, and, by extension, on the possibility of more equal gender relations in the private as well as public spheres (Dahlerup: 239). And, reiterating the point made by Mateo Diaz (below), along with other chapters in this book, the relationship between women, socioeconomic opportunities, and political citizenship is seen as an important interaction in facilitating gender-balanced parliaments. The big question remains: how far can quotas go in empowering women in a context in which caste, class, and religion combine to structure political life and divide women? Once again, more questions than answers are raised by the study of quotas. As the authors conclude, "if quotas are to fulfil their potential for addressing women's exclusion from political life, women's struggles need to focus on the issue of redistribution of resources if power relations in society are to be fundamentally changed" (Dahlerup: 241).

The final chapters point to the importance of an alignment between the electoral system in a country and the nature of the quota adopted – a point that, as noted above, is absent from the Caul Kittilson study (Dahlerup: 290–1, 293). In addition, the point is also made that quotas have a demonstrable effect: they bolster incremental increases in women's parliamentary seat-holding, bring about historical advances, and can bring women into political life in regions where they have been traditionally excluded from legislatures (Dahlerup: 293). In all, this is an important collection of essays analyzing the use of gender quotas to achieve political inclusion in a wide variety of contexts. What is implicit, and could be further drawn out in theoretical terms, is the relationship between quotas and parity democracy. In one sense, parity democracy (acknowledging the equal value of both sexes and expecting that both women and men should be represented when decisions are being made that affect their lives) is facilitated by quotas. While this book has a very strong unstated supposition that parity democracy is the outcome which quotas strive to bring about, accentuating the links between the normative model of parity democracy and the strategic mechanism of the quota would provide a more robust analytical framework within which to site the regional studies.

The Mateo Diaz book is a complement to the Caul Kittilson volume on elite women as elected representatives and members of party executives. It sets out to provide empirical, cross-national data on women's representation in 15 national legislatures in Western Europe. It is organized around three key questions addressed in the literature on women and politics. What affects women's parliamentary presence? Do numbers matter? Do women represent women? Indeed, this book addresses all three central issues in political representation: who, what, and how.

While these questions have preoccupied women and politics scholars over the past two decades on a case-by-case basis, this study brings a comparative dimension to bear on these core issues. In answering, Mateo Diaz first discusses the theoretical position elicited by each question. She then constructs hypotheses suggested by the literature and, using empirical data, seeks to evaluate these hypotheses.

This highly ambitious undertaking is laudable, much needed, and more convincing in some places than in others. In discussing the factors affecting the presence of women in parliament, the theoretical discussion is not particularly coherent (Mateo Diaz: 12–18). Mateo Diaz makes a more thorough case when discussing the conceptual differences between quotas and parity democracy. In the quota discussion, she delineates the different perspectives of "essentialist" and "intersectional" interpretations of quotas, pointing out that the latter "recognises that individuals experience discrimination for many reasons, which correspond to the discrimination of the disadvantaged groups to which they belong" (Mateo Diaz: 20). In sum, she puts forward Iris Marion Young's argument for quotas as addressing "social belongings [that] define women as a social group in terms of their positioning within society, and not in terms of identity" (Mateo Diaz: 20). She contrasts this position with that of Phillips, who sees quotas as a valuable means of redress for individuals who belong to "systematically under-represented groups" (Mateo Diaz: 20). However this discussion is not fully satisfactory, as it fails to reconcile the debate between Young and Phillips on the construction of women's interests versus women's social positioning that, for her, underpins the quota strategy.

The discussion of parity democracy is more satisfactory, as it reveals the underlying logic of the argument with a clarity not found in her discussion of quotas. In spite of their very different philosophical roots, quotas and parity share similar practical embodiments in affirmative action (nonbinding) and positive discrimination (mandatory) strategies (Mateo Diaz: 23). The succeeding discussion on quotas serves as a useful outline of the main forms taken by this generic gender-equality measure. Mateo Diaz takes a closer look than usual at the link between policy commitments to gender equality and outcomes in the first chapter of this book, and in doing so draws attention to the manner in which opportunities for gender-balancing political representation are created. In general, this chapter sets the context in which the core hypotheses for women's relative under-representation in political life are explored.

The argument that the stage of women's enfranchisement explains variations between countries, and disparities within countries, is the first of a number of analytical assumptions to be subject to scrutiny. Using statistical analysis, Mateo Diaz shows that women's parliamentary presence in 15 Western European countries follows a nonlinear path across time, with the exception of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, where women's representation increased steadily over time. In the other 12 countries, she observes a "take-off" in women's representation from the late 1970s, corresponding to the increasing politicization of gender concerns. She identifies institutional factors as also playing a role, particularly in the cases of Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and France. These observations are followed by a measuring of the impact of various socioeconomic conditions (education, religion, and workforce participation) and political system variables (electoral system, ideological balance, male and female enfranchisement, and use of positive action) on women's parliamentary presence. Bivariate regression

analysis indicates that countries among the 15 EU member states that have the largest presence of women in their parliaments share a clear cultural, socioeconomic, and political profile:

> Overall, Member States that have (1) Protestantism as the predominant religion, display (2) higher levels of educational attainment, in which (3) men and women have [a] more equal share of the tasks within the private sphere, (4) women have a better socio-economic status, (5) both men and women obtained an early right to vote, and (6) the proportional system fosters inclusiveness, are also the countries that have the largest presence of women in their national parliaments. (Mateo Diaz: 63)

This observation is further refined to determine the relative significance and causal direction of these conditions. Mateo Diaz suggests that the most consistent factors in explaining women's political representation are rooted in the cultural context of each society, and especially in the dominant cultural beliefs about gender roles. While women's economic participation is an important condition in enabling women's empowerment overall, it is not sufficient to ensure an increased presence of women in the legislature. Nonetheless, having more women in the workforce is a necessary support for changes in cultural attitudes that in turn feed into a greater political presence for women (Mateo Diaz: 81).

Mateo Diaz situates her book in the context of equal outcomes as an expected result of equal opportunities – an articulation of parity democracy. This claim creates the space for her to consider the mechanisms of redress through "positive discrimination" that have been instituted in a number of the countries in her study. Her analysis is based on a comprehensive and thorough trawl of existing datasets on women's parliamentary presence, supplemented by interviews with Belgian and Swedish parliamentarians. This set of qualitative interviews complements those conducted in the UK, Poland, and Germany by Caul Kittilson, while the quantitative research expands and deepens that collected by Caul Kittilson.

Mateo Diaz scrutinizes in some detail the application and effects of quotas and other positive action measures on women's representation and reveals a nuanced story. In the case of Belgium, she finds that party electoral gain is the key to women's electoral success, explaining the variation in women's parliamentary presence from one election to the next. While the quota law has a positive effect, it is not the overriding explanation for women's seat-holding (Mateo Diaz: 93). Subsequent reforms regulating the positions given to female candidates on party lists gave the quota law a more substantive effect.

Whether, and how, women MPs can contribute differently to men in parliamentary deliberations is taken forward by Mateo Diaz. Transposing Kanter's hypothesis of group effectiveness into a parliamentary setting, the second part of this book begins with a thought-provoking discussion of the issue of "critical mass" and the context in which a minority group can overcome parliamentary custom and practice (or "inertia" in Mateo Diaz's words) to change the institution and the institutional agenda. In operationalizing the critical mass hypothesis, two legislatures are examined in detail, with a focus on gender-related differences between legislators and an analysis of legislative behavior and institutional change as perceived by MPs. Mateo Diaz comes to three important conclusions: first, that the legislative process is shaped by several "critical minorities," and not just one; second, that female parliamentarians have a discernible impact on the legislative

process when they make up around 21 percent of parliament; and, third, change is not only a function of increased numbers of women MPs, but a result of the interaction of the media, public opinion, and a larger proportion of female parliamentarians combining to create the climate for identifying and pursuing specific issues in the legislature (Mateo Diaz: 178–80).

The third part of this deep investigation into women's parliamentary presence turns to discussing "whether male and female voters and representatives prioritise the same things" (Mateo Diaz: 183). On this point, Mateo Diaz provides some unexpected findings to the effect that in general female MPs are less representative in issue terms of female voters than male MPs are of their own gender, but that the overall effect is one in which parliament becomes more representative. In other words, when the proportion of female MPs increases, so too does the overall representativeness of parliament, though the substantive representativeness increases to a lesser degree than the gender proportionality (Mateo Diaz: 201). The explanations for the lower issue congruence between female MPs and female voters are interesting: female MPs are not typical of female voters, as they do not reflect the general educational and religious orientations of female voters. In addition, female MPs need to take more extreme positions on issues to distinguish themselves from male legislators and thus move away from the issue positions of typical female voters. These are contentious findings, and will undoubtedly be revisited, and contested, by other political scientists interested in gender effects in politics. At the end of this thoughtful and carefully analyzed book, Mateo Diaz provides the reader with an intriguing suggestion that will feed the study of women and parliament for some time to come: "could it be assumed that new legislators tend to be less congruent with the electorate because they are trying to form and change opinion, more than just registering and reflecting it?" (Mateo Diaz: 234).

The foregoing volumes have addressed the gendered nature of representation in the conventional terms of women's party and parliamentary presence. Together they contribute to mainstream discussions of representation in political science, provide fresh insights into the three aspects of representation outlined at the beginning of this piece, and offer routes to further investigations on the subject. The fourth volume, edited by Lovenduski, takes a different, and arguably more challenging, look at representation and its gendered aspect.[1] It addresses the links between the women's movement, women's policy agencies and policy outcomes on political representation, revealing new patterns, confirming older findings, and indicating a new direction for comparative feminist research in this field.

The primary focus of this volume is to explore the role of women's policy agencies (for example, equal opportunity bodies and women's units within government) in facilitating interactions between the women's movement and the state on the subject of women's political representation. It is a further volume in the state feminism series produced by the international research group RNGS (Research Network on Gender Politics and the State) which has developed a unique methodology for comparative qualitative research. The book comprises an introductory chapter in which this methodology is discussed, the research model presented, and the five main hypotheses outlined. This is followed by 11 country studies, drawn from Western Europe and the USA, in which authors explore three legislative debates on political representation for each country.

The final chapter brings together the findings of these 33 debates and analyzes the results in terms of the research model.

Central to the study is a sophisticated understanding of the policy process, and the ways in which policy debates are framed. The essays in this collection carefully investigate the framing of legislative debates on representation and the extent to which ideas about women and men were inserted into the discussions. The key agents in this framing are women's policy agencies within the state administrative structure, and the women's movement that provides the feminist definition of the representation issue. Thus, the focus is on assessing the extent to which state feminist units reflect women's movement efforts to bring about changes in representation, and how successful the efforts of women's policy agencies are in reframing a representation debate in feminist terms. The way in which the problem is set up presupposes that women's policy agencies and the women's movement are in broad agreement on the need to feminize representation debates, and indeed that the political agenda seeks to address representation issues in the first place. This approach, then, is less applicable in polities where representation is a nonissue, in countries where the feminist movement is either weak or disorganized, and in bureaucracies where women's policy agencies are but token units or symbolic gestures. Nevertheless, this book is a treasure trove not only for feminist scholars of politics, but for anyone with an interest in the policy process.

The five hypotheses addressed by the subsequent country case studies are as follows:

1. The women's movement in democratic states has succeeded in increasing the descriptive (numerical) and substantive (content) representation of women.
2. The women's movement has been more successful in increasing women's representation in places where women's policy agencies have gendered the policy debates in line with the goals of the women's movement.
3. Women's policy agencies endowed with institutional capacity have been more effective in linking the women's movement with policy-makers than their counterparts with fewer resources and less capacity.
4. Variations within the women's movement or the policy environment, or both, explain the effectiveness or otherwise of women's policy agencies and the women's movement in increasing women's representation.
5. Women's policy agencies have tended to provide necessary and effective linkages between women's movement activism and substantive and procedural responses by democratic states.

An important element in testing these hypotheses was the case selection of political representation debates in order to determine women's inclusion. To highlight whether the women's policy agencies raised the issue of women's inclusion in wider representation debates, one of the three selected representation debates in each country was *not* to be about women's political representation. This rigorous qualitative methodology provided the framework for the exploration of the 33 debates on political representation.

As an overall analytical framework, it works well. It allows for the study of political representation as a process in considerable detail in each country, and traces the

"gendering" of the debates, the impact of the women's movement in each case, the nature of the policy outcome, and the role of women's policy agencies in the process. The debates in this volume were evenly divided between quota discussions (17 cases) and an eclectic mix of other representational issues. They shed a wealth of new light on the gendered nature of political representation.

The rigor of the research model carries through into the individual country chapters, and while the investigations in all cases are thorough, the structure does not make for easy reading. Every debate on representation is treated under six headings, rendering the concluding comments of each chapter particularly important in bringing the threads of the analysis together for the country in question. The study as a whole complements the investigations into quota adoption contained in the Dahlerup volume. However, it takes more commitment from the reader to follow the policy trajectory than does the Dahlerup collection. It nonetheless rewards the effort. One of the strengths of this volume is that it does not shirk from discussing debates where the women's movement failed to secure positive outcomes for women. Nor is it afraid to address instances where the women's policy agency proved ineffective in supporting women's movement demands.

The concluding chapter undertakes the ambitious task of relating the disparate debates to the research model and drawing generalized findings from the rich qualitative data. This is the most difficult chapter in the book, but rewards close reading. The clear picture that emerges is that, on their own, women's policy agencies cannot accomplish policy changes that support women's political representation. They cannot act as a substitute for a women's movement. On the other hand, a successful outcome requires a cohesive women's movement interested enough in the issue of representation to give it a high priority, and in these circumstances, the support of a sympathetic women's policy agency working within the policy process can be important. In line with other research, this study finds that having a left-leaning government in power at the time of the debate can also support a positive outcome in terms of women's inclusion, and facilitates the advocacy of sympathetic women's policy agencies.

These summary findings cannot do justice to the richness of the patterns of relationships revealed in this volume between the women's movement, women's policy agencies, and the state. As a comparative qualitative study, it goes beyond findings grounded in nation-state studies. As a work of feminist scholarship in political science, it is an indispensable addition to the three other studies of the gendered nature of representation.

Conclusion

The four volumes in this review represent major new contributions to the study of gender and political representation. They contribute to the developing sophistication of research in this field, and bring an important perspective to bear on the generic concept of representation and its interpretation in the 21st century. Each volume provides new evidence confirming old suppositions, and sets out new findings that require further research. The volumes are clearly grounded in the normative view that women's under-representation in political decision-making is unacceptable in a polity that identifies as democratic. This is a strong

normative base, and one supported by extensive theoretical discussion. These volumes tell us much about the gendered nature of political representation and about the political activism that has brought this aspect of representation to scholarly attention.

Note

1. An earlier review of the Lovenduski book appeared in the *Journal of Gender Studies* 15(3) in November 2007.

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