


BOOK REVIEW

***Making Gender Salient: From Gender Quota Laws to Policy* by Ana Catalano Weeks. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 300 pp. \$99.99 (cloth), ISBN: 9781009167833; \$29.99 (paper), ISBN: 9781009158442.**

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Electoral gender quotas have transformed electoral democracy in the last quarter century. They have ushered women into new positions of power at all levels of government in places as diverse as France, Senegal, and Bolivia. A dominant strand of the gender and politics literature has attempted to keep pace with this global phenomenon, seeking to understand what these legislative reforms mean for women's substantive representation. Do quotas make a difference for policy? In *Making Gender Salient*, Ana Catalano Weeks makes huge strides in moving this research agenda forward. She theorizes and empirically demonstrates not only *whether* quotas matter for policy making, but also *when* and *how* they matter.

On the question of whether: Catalano Weeks uses both large-*n* statistical analyses and in-depth qualitative case studies to find unequivocal evidence that the implementation of gender quotas shifts public policy in ways that benefit working mothers. This is no small feat. Most research on gender quotas has focused on a single case, examining legislative patterns in the same country before and after the reform. The implied counterfactual in these studies, however, is exceptionally difficult to measure: might we observe the same patterns even in the absence of quotas?

Catalano Weeks addresses this methodological challenge head-on. Using a complete sample of OECD countries, she conducts difference-in-difference estimates comparing trends in quota-adopting countries to the counterfactual set of cases in which quotas were not adopted. She then uses a matching algorithm to pair two quota-adopting counties (Belgium and Portugal) to their similar but non-quota-adopting counterparts (Austria and Italy). Across the analyses, she finds that quotas matter: using a panel data set of party manifestos from OECD countries, she finds that following the passage of quota laws, parties dedicate more space in their manifestos to issues of equality. With a similar sample of countries, she finds that quotas are associated with an additional 19 weeks of

leave that promotes gender equality: paid parental and father-specific leave rather than maternity leave only. Throughout, she complements these analyses with hand-coded quantitative and fieldwork-rich qualitative data from her cases, finding evidence that parties in Belgium and Portugal changed in ways that emphasize childcare and leave policies promoting gender equality following quota adoption, while their counterparts, Austria and Italy, did not.

On the question of *when* quotas matter, Catalano Weeks breaks new ground in theorizing the types of issues on which we would expect to see substantive effects. Most scholars who investigate this question employ one of two strategies: Some scholars have theorized a priori about issues that should matter for women because of women's specific interests (freedom from gendered violence, for instance) or women's historically ascribed social roles (children's health, for instance). Other scholars have inductively measured gender gaps using surveys, among either citizens or elected representatives, and theorized that women representatives will dedicate more time to issues on which we observe a sizable gender gap.

Catalano Weeks moves beyond these approaches and for the first time takes seriously how women's issues fit into classic dimensions of party politics. She theorizes that quota-elected women will only make a difference on issues that do not fall along class cleavages on which parties have historically organized. Key to her argument is that statutory quotas usher in new cohorts of women politicians across the political spectrum, including in right-leaning parties that historically have had few women. This dynamic allows cross-party women's coalitions to form and gives women the opportunity to collectively lobby on issues that major parties have been slow to touch because they do not align with classic issues of economic class. From this theorizing, Catalano Weeks identifies progressive family leave policies—those that support working mothers—as a most likely case for identifying the policy impact of quotas; it is an issue on which there are sizable gender gaps *within* parties. This is a hugely important contribution because it gives us insights not only on when we should expect quotas to “work” but also on why women's issues have been so historically sidelined in the absence of gender quotas. In the United States, for instance, the lack of women in the Republican Party (still 90% male in the U.S. Congress) has made family policy essentially a nonstarter.

Finally, on *how* quotas work, Catalano Weeks brings together disparate arguments within the quota literature to build one unified theory. She argues that quotas work in three ways: (1) by changing the gender composition of parliaments, particularly among right-leaning parties, and thus allowing for cross-party collaborations among women; (2) by promoting women to leadership positions within parliaments; and (3) by making gender a salient policy dimensions among all politicians—both men and women, incoming and incumbent, and across parties. Through her qualitative case studies, she finds that some combination of these mechanisms, but not necessarily all three, are necessary to promote reform.

The third mechanism that Catalano Weeks describes—that gender quotas work by bringing more attention to women's issues within parliaments—finds the most support across the quantitative and qualitative analyses. In fact, one

analysis suggests that quota adoption is followed by more attention to equality issues in party manifestos even though the quotas did not increase women's representation in the same period. This is an issue to which the book could have devoted more attention. Is this perhaps evidence of the thorny problem of causality—that quotas are ushered in at times when publics or legislatures, for whatever reason, are interested in gender-equality reforms more broadly?

The merits of this work are several. On theory, the book gives us a unified framework about whether, when, and how quotas affect policy that can be generalized to other issue areas, other marginalized groups, and other parts of the world. Methodologically, the book uses cutting-edge and best-practice research tools to make the strongest case possible that quotas matter. This is something that few works on quotas have been able to do as completely as Catalano Weeks has achieved here. Quota scholars have been waiting for this work for a long time, and I foresee *Making Gender Salient* becoming a staple among our classic texts on representation.

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