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February 2011 Vol. 48 No. 06

SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Political Science - Comparative Politics

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New York, NY 10010-7848

*The following review appeared in the February 2011 issue of CHOICE:*

48-3520

JN2997

2009-48544 CIP

Murray, Rainbow. **Parties, gender quotas and candidate selection in France.** Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 187p bibl index afp ISBN 9780230242531, \$80.00

The use of gender quotas in elections has increased significantly in Western democracies. France has had such a parity law since 2000, with political parties being fined when they do not run enough female candidates. However, attempts at gender parity in French elections have been only moderately successful. Murray (Univ. of London, UK) questions why some major French parties are more likely than others to implement the parity law. She devotes a chapter to each of the three classic theories of party behavior (i.e., ideological, electoral, and institutional) in order to explain variation in implementation. Assuming parties are rational actors, she finds that French parties are motivated by electoral competition, influenced by institutional constraints, and possess ideological motivations. She concludes, however, that each theoretical approach is not sufficient to explain fully why French parties select the candidates that they do. The pursuit of electoral office motivates some; others are pushed by ideology or practical considerations such as finances. Equally important as such specific findings, this well-organized and insightful analysis effectively weaves together major literatures on comparative political parties, gender, and politics. In doing so, Murray's book makes a unique contribution to both literatures. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. All undergraduate, graduate, and research collections. -- *T. D. Lancaster, Emory University*