

Party Politics, Religion, and Women's Leadership Lebanon in Comparative Perspective

Fatima Sbaity Kassem

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Fatima Sbaity Kassem is the former Director of the UN-Centre for Women, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) in Baghdad, Amman, and Beirut and a freelance consultant on gender and women's issues in Arab countries. She received her PhD from Columbia University, USA and was Regional Coordinator for the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995).

'Fatima Sbaity Kassem produces an incisive analysis. Cutting through prevailing explanations, she pinpoints political party religiosity as the driver of low female parliamentary representation in 330 parties and 26 countries. No previous work on women's political participation has targeted a precise variable so persuasively. Exceedingly readable and powerful, this book is an eye-opener for feminists, political activists, and social theorists.'

- **Suad Joseph, Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and Women and Gender Studies, University of California, Davis, USA**

'This unique book with its bold argument about the impact of political party religiosity on patterns of women's leadership is sure to be debated and discussed. Backed by prodigious and original research—broadly comparative and statistical in its cross-national vision, on the one hand, and astoundingly detailed in its close analysis of the case study of Lebanon, on the other—Fatima Sbaity Kassem's findings are as illuminating as her thesis is provocative.'

'Why have women's gains in socioeconomic and demographic realms not translated into greater women's leadership in politics, despite women's increased mobilization within political parties? Espousing a compelling institutional perspective, Fatima Sbaity Kassem shows that parties dominated by religious agendas block women's advancement to leadership positions. Based on extensive fieldwork involving in-depth interviews in Lebanon and a comparative cross-national analysis, her book makes a valuable contribution to the studies of women's political participation in general.'

- **Gunes Murat Tezcur, Loyola University Chicago, USA**

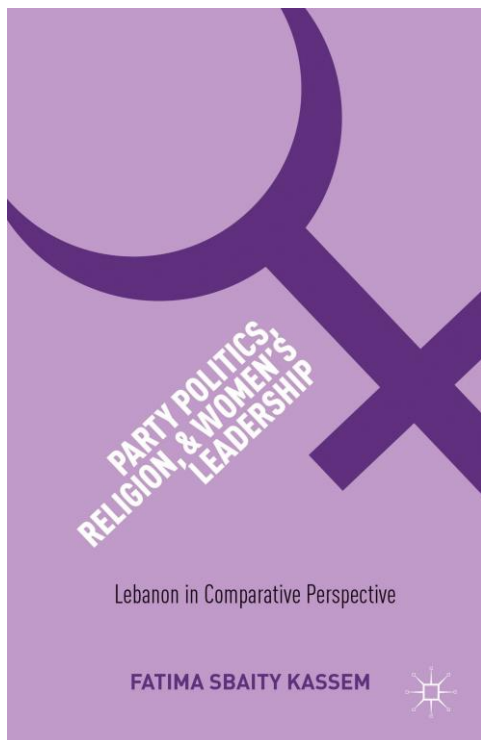
About the book

The 2011 Arab uprisings re-ignited global interest in the role that Islam and Islamist parties play in democratic transitions, especially with regard to women's lawful rights to share in governance and leadership. This book advances a theory of party religiosity to explain women's leadership across parties and countries, drawing on robust qualitative and quantitative findings from cross-national multiple cases and a case-study of Lebanon. The theory travels across 330 parties in 26 different countries - in Asia, Africa, and Europe. It is powerful and generalizable with explanatory and predictive powers.

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