

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Gender and Politics

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Tiffany D. Barnes

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Diana Z. O'Brien

Washington University in St. Louis

GLASS CEILINGS, GLASS CLIFFS, AND QUICKSANDS

Gendered Party Leadership in Parliamentary Systems

Andrea S. Aldrich

Yale University

Zeynep Somer-Topcu

University of Texas at Austin



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Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-53957-9 — Glass Ceilings, Glass Cliffs, and Quicksands
Gendered Party Leadership in Parliamentary Systems
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Frontmatter
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Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009539579

DOI: 10.1017/9781009429894

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When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009429894

First published 2025

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-009-53957-9 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-009-42986-3 Paperback

ISSN 2753-8117 (online)

ISSN 2753-8109 (print)

Additional resources for this publication at www.cambridge.org/EGAP_SomerTopcu

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Glass Ceilings, Glass Cliffs, and Quicksands

Gendered Party Leadership in Parliamentary Systems

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DOI: 10.1017/9781009429894
First published online: April 2025

Andrea S. Aldrich
Yale University

Zeynep Somer-Topcu
University of Texas at Austin

Author for correspondence: Zeynep Somer-Topcu, zsomer@utexas.edu

Abstract: Using novel leadership data from eleven developed parliamentary democracies between 1980 and 2020, this Element asks how gender conditions party leaders' candidacy, selection, and survival. It examines the life cycle of party leadership careers of 276 leaders with a focus on three categories of variables: performance indicators, (s)election details, and inclusiveness of political culture. It tests the existing theories of glass ceilings and glass cliffs on how certain conditions make it more likely that women run for and are selected as party leaders. The Element also offers an original quicksand theory on leaders' survival in office that, for women, leadership is akin to being caught in quicksand. Several factors agitate the quicksand and make them sink faster. The authors data shows support for the glass ceiling and quicksand theories. Yet, they find mixed support for the glass-cliff theory. The Element offers unique insights into women's experience with party leadership.

Keywords: Party leadership, women leaders, leader survival, leader candidates, leader elections

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ISBNs: 9781009539579 (HB), 9781009429863 (PB), 9781009429894 (OC)
ISSNs: 2753-8117 (online), 2753-8109 (print)

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