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Women and the Liberal Democrats: Representing Women

Elizabeth Evans

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Women and the Liberal Democrats: Representing Women Elizabeth Evans
Women and the Liberal Democrats is a timely and original exploration of women's representation and the third party in UK politics. Based on extensive research, it is the first comprehensive gendered analysis of the Liberal Democrats and the research highlights specific institutional factors within the Liberal Democrats that directly impact upon the party's low number of women MPs. It explores the extent to which the party's ideology, culture and organisation are dominated by a prevailing masculine bias and questions why the Liberal Democrats continue to overwhelmingly return white, middle-aged, male MPs to Westminster.

The book highlights a number of important findings: the Liberal Democrats' low number of women MPs is due to demand rather than supply; the party have not selected a sufficient number of women in winnable or target seats; the lack of women MPs undermines the party's pro-women policies; and women's interests have not been mainstreamed within the party. Together, these conclusions address substantive questions regarding the Liberal Democrats' numerical under-representation of women MPs and the extent to which they can act for and symbolically represent women.

The book demonstrates the importance of using gender as a tool for analysing the culture, organisation and political recruitment of British political parties. Its originality and contribution lie in the empirical findings and its ability to address wider conceptual debates.

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