

Brian Turnbull

WOMEN WHO ONLY SERVE CHAI

Gender Quotas, Reservations
and Proxies in India

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WOMEN WHO ONLY SERVE CHAI

This book investigates the experiences of women city councilors in India. It follows the careers of women in Jaipur, Rajasthan, who were brought into public office through a gender quota instituted over two decades ago. It reveals how, even in office, women continue to face stigma and normative restrictions imposed by a society not entirely willing to accept them in a public and independent position; and how men, technically blocked by the gender quota from holding office themselves, continue to exert control and influence over women officeholders, even sidelining them in many cases as proxies. The volume also documents the role of these men, colloquially known as *parshad-patis*, who have uniquely subverted the gender quota without violating any of the formal quota rules. To combat these challenges, the author presents pragmatic approaches to empower women in political offices at the grassroots and highlights the need for a comprehensive support structure to aid gender quota institutions in delivering equality in highly patriarchal environments.

Drawing on extensive fieldwork and interviews with elected members and their spouses, as well as journalists, women's rights activists, and student political leaders, this book provides fascinating insights into the everyday politics of India. It will be of great interest to scholars and researchers of gender studies, politics, political processes, and South Asian studies.

Brian Turnbull is a faculty member at the University of South Florida in the Department of Sociology, USA, with interdisciplinary interests in democratic representation, gender and politics, South Asian politics, and qualitative methodology. He has primarily conducted research on the use of gender quotas to improve representational equality in the global South, but he has also published on authoritarian consolidation and qualitative methodologies in the field. He teaches comparative politics and coordinates student internships for the department. He enjoys preparing students for their careers and post-university work by encouraging the development of communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. He received his PhD in political science with focuses in comparative politics and international relations from the University of Kansas, USA. Prior, he received his MA in security studies from Georgetown University, Washington, D.C, USA.

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