



Women in the South African Parliament: From Resistance to Governance

Hannah Britton

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Although the international press closely chronicled the dismantling of South Africa's apartheid policies, it paid little attention to the unique role women from a variety of political parties played in establishing the new government. Utilizing interviews, participant observation, and archival research, *Women in the South African Parliament* tells an inspiring story of liberation, showing how these women achieved electoral success, learned to work with lifelong enemies, and began to transform Parliament by creating more space for women's voices during a critical time in the life of their democracy. Arguing from her detailed analysis of the strategies and political tactics used by these South African women, both individually and collectively, Hannah Britton contends that, contrary to claims in earlier studies of the developing world, mobilization by women prior to a transition to democracy can lead to gains after the transition--including improvements in constitutional mandates, party politics, and representation. At the same time, Britton demonstrates that not even national leadership can ensure power for all women and that many who were elected to South Africa's first democratic parliament declined to run again, feeling they could have a greater impact working in their own communities.

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