



Sylvia Bashevkin. *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders: National Security and Gender Politics in Superpower America.* Oxford Studies in Gender and International Relations Series. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. xii + 266 pp. \$74.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-087537-4.

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Where are the women in diplomatic history? This is one of the questions Sylvia Bashevkin seeks to answer with *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders*. At the heart of her project are her case studies of four such women: former US ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick and former secretaries of state Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice, and Hillary Rodham Clinton. These character studies all serve to underpin Bashevkin's central assertion that "these women shaped foreign policy in meaningful ways during a series of Republican and Democratic administrations" in the United States (p. 1). Drawing extensively on autobiography and memoirs as well as secondary materials, Bashevkin tracks the trajectories of these women's lives from childhood through their schooling and early careers, and into the halls of power. The result is a series of engaging, readable, and thought-provoking assessments about what factors enable the rise of female leaders in the United States, what influence they may have over policies, and what barriers they face in having their voices heard.

Bashevkin's insights on these matters range from the unsurprising (like the shared experience of elite schooling) to the intriguing (like the women's shared birth order and early exposure to hobbies that challenged gender roles). Along with unity, the author also finds diversity. Her case study of

Rice is perhaps the most obvious example, discussing her experiences in the context of the civil rights movement and, later, struggles over affirmative action. However, Bashevkin also makes important arguments about how women relate to each other at these elite levels of policymaking, pointing out the important role that First Ladies can play in either advancing women or preventing their rise, as was the case with Nancy Reagan and Kirkpatrick.

This volume will most likely appeal to both feminist scholars (of international relations, foreign policy, and comparative politics) and researchers interested in the individual level of analysis in US foreign policy. As a study of female leaders and leaders beneath the level of the presidency, the work occupies a unique niche and complements the more well-worn ground of the "Great Man" approach, with its interest in presidential personalities. Indeed, perhaps the book's major shortcoming is that it does not engage robustly with either of these literatures. Literature reviews in the first two chapters situate the work firmly among scholarship on diplomatic history and gender in comparative politics, but a section on the study of executive leadership fails to cite the influential work of (among others) Margaret Hermann, while sections on women and conflict could have

engaged more completely with the body of work on this topic in feminist security studies. Still, Bashevkin herself points out that this book should be viewed as the beginning of a conversation, one expected to continue with the analysis of more recent figures in US foreign policy as well as those yet to come. In that sense, it is a most welcome entry into the discussion—one scholars may hope to continue into the future.

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