S. Bashevkin, “When do outsiders break in? Institutional circumstances of party leadership victories by women in Canada,” *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 48:1 (February 2010)

**Overview**

Limited empirical research has probed the institutional circumstances under which outsiders ‘break in’. Second-wave feminist movements since 1970s offer a case study – they not only attracted women to mainstream political activism – including at top elite levels – but also challenged parties in organizational as well as policy terms. This study examines how selection processes, electoral competitiveness, and left/right positioning shaped elite-level success. It concludes that women’s ability to win top posts was facilitated by weak electoral competitiveness and positioning outside the political right, meaning victorious candidates assumed positions of responsibility in parties that were far from the corridors of power.