

## From the Editors

As Women and Politics Research enters its third decade as an organized Section of the American Political Science Association, we begin the third volume of *Politics & Gender*, the official journal of the Section. Our goal as editors, and the mission of *Politics & Gender*, has been “to publish the very best work on *women and politics*, and on *gender and politics*” (I.1: 2). Across the three volumes of our editorship, we are proud to have established a journal that political scientists worldwide recognize as the standard for politics and gender scholarship. From empirical analyses of women’s political representation to feminist theorizing to feminist textual analyses of U.S. security rhetoric and health-care reform, *Politics & Gender* has sought to publish high-quality work that ranges across methodologies, topics, subfields, and disciplines.

*Politics & Gender* has crafted an understanding of the subfield that embraces intersectionality, confirms its interdisciplinarity, and acknowledges its indebtedness to feminist theory and to feminist movements. The work we publish is grounded in the core concepts of politics, gender, and women. From the outset, *Politics & Gender* has been concerned with politics and the study of politics. Nancy Burns’s “Finding Gender” and Karen Beckwith’s “A Common Language of Gender,” in Volume 1, constituted part of our initiative to explicate what we mean by gender as a concept in political science and how it might be employed. Similarly, in Volume 2, Laurel Weldon, in her essay “The Structure of Intersectionality,” and Louise Chappell, in “Comparing Political Institutions: Revealing the Gendered ‘Logic of Appropriateness,’” grapple with the problematics and promise of a “comparative politics of gender.” Nancy Burns and Jane Junn, in this first issue of Volume 3, engage in a critical dialogue concerning gender, power, and inequalities. They debate the possibilities of a “theory of politicized context” that reveals the power of

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politics in constructing gender and gendered behavior. In the next issue, we will publish a Critical Perspectives section that focuses on intersectionality and addresses the conceptual and practical issues involved in doing intersectional research, with specific attention to gender, race, and class.

*Politics & Gender* has further explored the transformative nature of feminist analysis. In our first issue, Mary Hawkesworth's "immodest proposal" of "Engendering Political Science" sought to position feminist scholarship as "a dominant paradigm" in political science. Martha Ackelsberg, among others, reflected on the contributions of feminist scholarship—and feminist scholars—to a "more just world." V. Spike Peterson asserted the crucial responsibility of political scientists for analyzing power and privilege and for asking "socially relevant questions" (I.1: 358). From her perspective, feminist scholarship meets this responsibility by "insisting that *gender is a pervasive code that systemically operates to normalize denigration of the 'feminine' in its diverse manifestations*" (I.2: 359; emphasis in original). And Anna Shola Orloff and Julia Adams initiated a spirited dialogue concerning modernity, women, and politics that elicited responses from Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, and from Iris Marion Young.

The compelling political concerns of gender and women have been the concerns of *Politics & Gender* as well. Are gender quotas a solution for the persistent, universal underrepresentation of women in national legislatures? Is there an aggregate critical mass that political women must achieve in order to accelerate (or even initiate) women-friendly public policy? How are elections and policymaking gendered and racialized, and how can citizens and activists work through, with and/or against gender to achieve their ends? How do states structure opportunities and possibilities for women and politics?

The third volume of *Politics & Gender* will sustain similar lines of inquiry. In this issue, Jill Irvine investigates the women's movement in Croatia in "From Civil Society to Civil Servants: Women's Organizations and Critical Elections in Croatia." Irvine's findings challenge several aspects of the role that women's movements play in the context of democratization in postcommunist societies. The Croatian women's movement not only remained vibrant and influential despite the legacy of a brutal civil war and a stalled process of democratization, but it also successfully promoted the adoption of gender quotas, which led in 2000 to the "highest percentage of women in parliament in Eastern Europe." We anticipate that this fascinating case study will prompt a

profound rethinking of the conventional wisdom about women's movements.

Heather L. Ondercin and Jeffrey L. Bernstein analyze the impact of context in U.S. Senate elections at the close of the twentieth century. In "Context Matters: The Influence of State and Campaign Factors on the Gender Gap in Senate Elections, 1988–2000," Ondercin and Bernstein examine the gender gap as an aggregate phenomenon, departing from studies that examine the gender gap at the level of individual voters. They attribute increases in the gender gap over time to contextual factors that turn up the volume of women's voices in campaigns. These factors include candidate gender, level of seniority, and, within particular states, percentage of African-American population and the feminization of poverty.

Lonna Rae Atkeson and Nancy Carillo focus on individual-level attitudes and beliefs in "More Is Better: The Influence of Collective Female Descriptive Representation on External Efficacy." This article takes the study of descriptive representation beyond the halls of the statehouse to examine how the gender of elected officials affects people's perception of government responsiveness. Their results are heartening. As they write, "When greater proportions of female state legislators are present, the likelihood that women feel better about government, and hence the democratic society in which they live, improves."

Finally, Rianne Mahon's article, "Challenging National Regimes from Below: Toronto Child-Care Politics," examines the challenges of instituting a universal child-care policy in a federal system. Mahon describes the specific details of the Toronto case to illustrate the opportunities and constraints that activists face in negotiating across federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government. Toronto developed a model program of universal child care, thanks to feminist efforts to construct a "cross-class coalition of child-care providers, parents, trade unionists, city bureaucrats, and politicians," but proved unable to export the model beyond the municipal level. As she concludes, "Local mobilization may help to establish the credibility of an egalitarian alternative, but these will remain but fragile local experiments if activists are not able to secure changes at higher scales."

A conventional feature of *Politics & Gender* has been our "From the Editors," which has served as the introduction to each volume. In this one, however, we as editors will also introduce a conclusion. We will step down as editors of *Politics & Gender* with the publication of the four issues that constitute this third volume. A new editorial team to replace

us will be selected in the next several months. (Please see the announcement of the “Call for Editorial Team Proposals” in II.4, December 2006.) We will conclude our editorship with Volume 3, Issue 4, on July 1, 2007, marking the end of four years of work. We do so confident in the future of the journal. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as the founding editors for the journal of the Women and Politics Research Section, whose members are our colleagues, our mentors, our role models, our supporters, and our friends.

Across these several years of our editorship, we have witnessed many changes. Some were professional. Several editorial board members have changed institutional affiliation—including Karen, who is now the Flora Stone Mather Professor at Case Western Reserve University. Some changes were political: As this issue is being published, a record number of women are taking their seats in the U.S. Congress, in both chambers, and the Honorable Nancy Pelosi is Speaker of the House of Representatives—the first woman Speaker in U.S. history, and the third in line of succession to the presidency. Michelle Bachelet, Tarja Halonen, and Angela Merkel have won election to the highest office in Chile, Finland, and Germany (respectively), and Ségolène Royal has just been named the Socialist Party’s candidate for president of France. These formal political changes are likely to resonate throughout future issues of *Politics & Gender*.

Other changes have simply been part of the nature of life. At least one editorial board member has married; at least two have had children. Heartbreaking for us was the loss of Iris Marion Young, our board member, who died in 2006. Her name will continue to be listed on the Editorial Board masthead for as long as we remain editors.

We thank the Women and Politics Research Section, Cambridge University Press, and the American Political Science Association for their institutional support; the Section’s guidance and leadership, the patience and support of our editors at CUP, and good advice from Michael Brintnall at APSA have encouraged and sustained us. Case Western Reserve University, the College of Wooster, and Dartmouth College also deserve our gratitude for their support of *Politics & Gender*. The generous underwriting that our home institutions provided for us has proven crucial to the inauguration of the journal, to its continuing development, and, now, to its future success.

As we wrote in “From the Editors” (I.1: 1), the presence and success of *Politics & Gender* now renders moot “any question that politics and gender is a legitimate field of study.” This is a good way to start our third

and final volume, and a great way to begin the third decade of Women and Politics Research.

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