

## *From the Editors*

We launch *Politics & Gender* with the conviction that the study of women and politics, and the gendered analysis of politics, benefit and strengthen political science. We hold the reverse conviction as well: the tools of political analysis advance and strengthen our understandings of women and of gender. *Politics & Gender* is the official journal of the Women and Politics Research Section of the American Political Science Association. This new journal is thus situated firmly within the discipline of political science. While we maintain extensive interdisciplinary commitments, our primary purpose is to publish research on women and politics and on politics and its gendered analysis. Gender cuts through every aspect of politics. In *Politics & Gender*, we seek to represent the full array of questions, issues, and approaches within the discipline. We envision each issue as a showcase of work across all the major subfields of political science, including (but not limited to) political theory, comparative politics, international relations, and U.S. politics. We invite studies that address fundamental questions in politics and political science concerning women and concerning gender, including those that interrogate and challenge standard analytical categories and conventional methodologies.

The systematic study and critique of political power, however defined, is central to the discipline and enormously consequential for women and gender. We insist that it is both possible and appropriate to embrace a wide range of conceptualizations of the political, a plethora of means and methods by which to investigate the political, and a constant, ultimate focus on the political, in approaching women and gender.

We proudly acknowledge the historical links that exist between research on women and gender and what was known as the women's liberation movement. We place *Politics & Gender* in the historical context of the political study of women and gender that derived from organized feminism. To that end, *Politics & Gender* publishes scholarship that re-

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flects the core concerns of feminisms and women's movements worldwide.

Note that we aim to publish the very best work being done on *women and politics*, and on *gender and politics*. This is an important distinction and one that warrants clarification. We offer a brief explanation here, but we also envision *Politics & Gender* as a forum in which discussions and debates about the validity and significance of this distinction will take place. The first category seems obvious to us: scholarship on women and politics focuses primarily on *women*. It accepts the existence of women as an established social category. Such research may study women in terms of leadership, elite behavior, public opinion, mobilization, participation, decision making, policy preferences, collective identity, and their role in canonical texts of political theory, as well as a wide range of other political concerns. These topics constitute the lion's share of research in the field, and they continue to fuel exciting research. Other research on women and politics explicitly tests the precepts of feminist theorizing and extends the boundaries of what has been considered "political" in the discipline of political science. Still more research has interrogated and challenged who counts as "women." The increasing multicultural, multirace, multiethnic and internationalist appreciations of the discipline of political science have been led, in part, by women and politics scholars articulating the complexity of the concept "women" along trajectories of race, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, and class. All of these various approaches focus primarily on women and fall appropriately under the category of *women and politics*.

What then constitutes research on *gender*? Simply put, research on gender examines the ways in which politics shapes, and is shaped by, differences between men and women. Research on gender recognizes the differences among women and among men as well. Research on gender and politics problematizes the ways in which gender differences are salient to politics. It shines light on how state institutions and political actors create and rely upon understandings of feminine and masculine, and how people mobilize to change those understandings. It also reveals the ways in which political decisions imply different outcomes for men and women. The brief definition we offer here in this opening statement is only a starting point. For a more comprehensive and thorough answer to this question, we refer you to the "Critical Perspectives" section of this issue, in which several prominent scholars offer their views.

As Carroll and Zerilli reminded us a decade ago in *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II* (1993: 55), “Feminist scholarship poses a set of questions that challenge the theoretical and epistemological foundations on which the discipline is constructed. Sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly, the work being done by feminist scholars raises important questions about both *what* we study as political scientists and *how* we study it.” *Politics & Gender* will emphasize the crucial nature of methodological and conceptual advances in the study of gender and politics and the importance of publishing work specifically concerned with these issues.

*Politics & Gender* has also made a commitment—born out of politics of the U.S. Black, Chicano, and Native American liberation movements and the early struggles of second-wave feminism and informed by feminist theoretical critiques by women of color—to publish work on women and race, and on gender and racialized politics. We believe that a conjunction of gender and race research, solicited for, submitted to, and published in this journal, will deepen our political scientific understandings of women, women of color, gender, and race. Readers will find issues of race and gender explicitly addressed by authors in the “Critical Perspectives” section of this issue.

Finally, and perhaps most crucially, feminist theorizing has served as the foundation for the advances made in women and politics, and gender and politics, research. We intend to publish a range of outstanding feminist political theorizing, which extends to include (but is hardly limited to) issues of identity, representation, sexuality, power, and state relations. *Politics & Gender’s* associate editors and editorial board reflect our recognition of the role of feminist political theorizing in advancing the subfield of women and politics, and gender and politics, research, as well as our commitment to disseminating, through *Politics & Gender*, the best feminist theoretical work available.

In short, we strongly support the publication of first-rate mainstream empirical and theoretical work in *Politics & Gender*. As editors, we hope to establish *Politics & Gender* as the leading journal in the subfield. We envision *Politics & Gender* as a fresh contribution to interdisciplinary women’s studies scholarship. We are devoted to ensuring that *Politics & Gender* is the intellectually rigorous, methodologically sophisticated, agenda-setting journal envisioned by the Women and Politics Research Section, the American Political Science Association, and Cambridge University Press.

In this first issue, we offer four exemplary articles concerning women, politics and gender, located in different disciplinary and subdisciplinary subfields. Michaela L. Ferguson's "W Stands for Women: Feminism and Security Rhetoric in the Post-9/11 Bush Administration" analyzes the gendered implications of the current administration's security rhetoric. Ferguson (University of Colorado) maintains that Bush administration rhetoric about the status of women rests on the presumption that the women's movement in the United States successfully achieved its goals long ago. She discusses the actual situations of women in the United States and Afghanistan in order to show how the Bush administration uses feminist ideas in new and non-feminist ways, and how scholars in turn might redeploy the Bush rhetoric to challenge claims that women in the U.S. already enjoy full citizenship rights.

In "When Women Run Against Women: The Hidden Influence of Female Incumbents in Elections to the U.S. House of Representatives, 1956–2002," Barbara Palmer (American University) and Dennis Simon (Southern Methodist University) elucidate the patterns of nomination and election for women and men in U.S. House districts. They add nuance and new insights to the conventional wisdom that when women run, they win as often as men. Their major finding—that women House incumbents face more competitive environments than men—suggests that women incur disproportional costs to achieve the same levels of political success as their male colleagues. Their work also indicates that the presence of a female incumbent actually *genders* the competition in both parties' primaries in the district and in future elections in the House, where potential candidates make calculations based on women's electoral success and shift their likelihood of running.

Kathleen Bratton (Louisiana State University), in "Critical Mass Theory Revisited: The Behavior and Success of Token Women in State Legislatures," challenges the conventional wisdom about the need for a critical mass of women in legislative office. Analyzing evidence from state legislatures, she finds that a "critical mass" of women is not necessary for substantive representation on the part of individual female state legislators. Even in extremely skewed legislatures, women can develop legislative agendas distinct from those of their male colleagues, where they may be more active than, and as successful as, their male counterparts in sponsoring and passing legislation that focuses on women's interests. Bratton's work suggests that increasing the number of women in state legislatures may be less critical than increasing the number of feminists in achieving legislation beneficial to women.

Traci Levy (Adelphi University) addresses the way in which “family” has been defined by public policy in the United States. In “At the Intersection of Intimacy and Care: Redefining ‘Family’ through the Lens of a Public Ethic of Care,” Levy argues for a redefinition of family that includes both the biological ties that bind family members, and the functional “care” work that people perform for one another regardless of their biological ties. Levy maintains that this definition precludes the limitations implied by defining families only in terms of *form*, a limitation missed by both current public policy and advocates of “alternative forms” of family. She then essays the advantages of her perspective, a firm foundation upon which new political strategies might be built.

In addition to scholarly research, each issue of *Politics & Gender* includes a section titled “Critical Perspectives on Gender and Politics.” This section of the journal provides a forum for debate about substantive and theoretical issues within the subfield. It contains a series of brief essays in which scholars representing various approaches weigh in on a range of contentious topics. “Critical Perspectives on Gender and Politics” represents another component of our commitment to publishing innovative and field-advancing work on gender and politics.

*Politics & Gender* also includes a book review section. As “Book Reviews” editor, Kathleen A. Dolan has carefully solicited the best books on women and politics and gender and politics published since 2004, including work outside of political science. The book review section will routinely include work representing all the major subfields within political science—international relations, comparative politics, U.S. politics and feminist theory—as well as interdisciplinary work important to our readers.

We wish to express our deepest gratitude to all the people who have helped us launch *Politics & Gender*. First and foremost we thank the Women and Politics Organized Research Section of the APSA, whose members generated the idea for a new journal and initiated the process of establishing it. In particular, we thank the members of the committee that developed the original proposal and identified a publisher for *Politics & Gender*: Pippa Norris (chair), Susan J. Carroll, Christine di Stefano, and Georgia Duerst-Lahti. This initial committee succeeded in achieving a unanimous vote of the Section’s membership, at the 2003 Business Meeting, to establish an official Section journal, titled *Politics & Gender*, to be published by Cambridge University Press. Sylvia Bashvkin (Section president) chaired the editorial selection committee,

which included Cynthia Daniels, Jane Jaquette, Virginia Sapiro, and Susan Welch. We are grateful for the honor of being selected by them as the founding editors.

Others supported us along the way. Michael Brintnall, APSA Executive Director, and the APSA staff provided us with valuable information, assistance, and advice. Michael, in particular, made us confident of the commitment of the APSA and of our discipline to the new journal. We are grateful to him for his guidance and good humor. Our experience with Cambridge University Press has been reassuring and invigorating. It would be difficult to imagine a more helpful, more professional editor than Barbara Chin, and the support and assistance of Ed Carey and Susan Soule provided us with marketing and publicity materials. Donhae Koo helped us to meet our submissions deadlines and to craft, in practical terms, this launch issue. We thank Mark Lerner for designing the cover of the journal.

We are very grateful to the scholars who have accompanied us on this intellectual adventure, particularly our associate editors. Nancy Burns, Barbara Cruikshank, Kathleen A. Dolan and Joni Lovenduski have helped to shape the journal from its inception. They have cheerfully responded to our frequent requests for advice and generously shared their wisdom with us.

The members of our editorial board are a team of scholars whose professional stature must render moot any question that politics and gender is a legitimate field of study. The outstanding scholars on our editorial board were trained—and many wrote women and politics/gender and politics dissertations—at institutions ranging from Harvard and Heidelberg to Brandeis and Bremen to Syracuse and Sydney. The range of institutions at which this remarkable team of scholars teaches is similarly diverse and extensive. Eight of these political scientists work at institutions outside the United States. Our editorial board membership ranges across large research universities, such as Cornell and Ohio State, and small liberal arts colleges, such as Whitman and Wooster; our range includes public institutions like the Universities of Massachusetts and Wisconsin, as well as private ones, like Dartmouth and Chicago. An examination of the records of our associate editors and editorial board members reveals many prize-winning dissertations, books, and articles. This incredible group of people joined us even before we submitted our bid.

Finally, we thank our home institutions, the College of Wooster and Dartmouth College, for supporting us in our bid to become the found-

ing editors of *Politics & Gender*, and for continuing to support us in the year leading up to this first issue.

Karen Beckwith and Lisa Baldez  
Hudson, Ohio, and Hanover, New Hampshire  
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