

Gender Studies and Political Science: The History of the "Behavioralist Compromise"

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The Root is Man.

—Heinz Eulau, *The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics*

Some twenty years have passed since feminist scholars first began to challenge the content, substance, and research agendas of the academic disciplines. These methodological challenges, brought to the university by a new generation of scholars influenced by the political turbulence of the 1960s, have generated some of the most exciting research of the past decades. The persistence, strength, and steady growth of this new scholarship has now established the study of women as a legitimate focus of academic research. Today, almost half of all universities have a women's studies program, the women's studies community has its own organizations and journals, and almost all disciplines (including the "hard" sciences) have produced a substantial body of literature on women (Boxer 1982; Chamberlain 1988). However, a glance across the disciplines suggests the radically uneven response to the challenges posed by feminist scholars.

Despite a substantial increase in published research on women and politics, the feminist revolution has barely begun in the empirical subfields of political science. Feminist political scientists have pursued extensive and valuable work on subjects ranging from the origins of women's movements to the underrepresentation of women in legislative bodies. But compared to theoretical developments in the humanities, the large quantity of feminist work in political science has had remarkably little impact on the discipline as a whole. Within the last ten years (1980–90), the *American Political Science Review* (APSR) has published only two articles and three research notes on women,¹ while the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*

Previously unpublished essay.

1. These two articles were Eileen McDonough and H. Douglas Price, "Woman Suffrage in the Progressive Era: Patterns of Opposition and Support in Referenda Voting, 1910–1918," *APSR* 79(2): 415–35; Nancy Hirschmann, "Freedom, Recognition, and Obligation: A Feminist Ap-

(*PMLA*) and the *American Historical Review* (*AHR*) published dozens during the same period. Nor has feminist political science work been especially well received in the interdisciplinary women's studies community. Work by political scientists is strikingly underrepresented in journals such as *Signs* and *Feminist Studies*. Moreover, the amount of published material on women by feminist political scientists has been declining for at least the past five years.

The single most important contribution of contemporary feminist scholarship has been the recent emergence of gender as a category of analysis. It is the third phase of a three-stage process of theoretical development. In the first stage, feminist scholars simply appended women to established agendas of research. In the second stage, the social relations between the sexes became itself a new *topic* of research. This work focuses on the unequal power in the relations between men and women and examines historically specific patterns of struggle and compromise between them.² The structure of this analytical approach is similar to research on class relations that explores patterns of interaction between workers and management.

During the third and current stage, feminist scholars have employed gender as a new *category of analysis*. Used in this way, gender provides the theoretical lens through which the inequalities of power between men and women can be seen to structure (and are structured by) the organization of political, social, and economic life (Scott 1986). An example from the new feminist scholarship on the welfare state is perhaps most illustrative. Classic theories of the origin and development of the welfare state have commonly used class as their primary category of analysis. This scholarship has assumed that the welfare state emerged out of the contested intersection of capitalism, citizenship, and democracy (Briggs 1961; Marshall 1963; Titmuss 1958). As historian Linda Gordon has noted, however, this view of the evolution of the welfare state is implicitly based upon male workers' confrontation with late nineteenth-century capitalism and the state. It neither describes women's relationship to capitalism and the state during industrialization, takes account of their participation in the establishment of social welfare policy, nor explains the sexually differentiated programmatic structure of welfare states. Feminist scholarship employing gender as a category of analysis can do so (Gordon 1990).

proach to Political Theory," *APSR* 83(4): 1227–44. The three research notes were Jerry Perkins and Diane Fowlkes, "Opinion Representation versus Social Representation; Or, Why Women Can't Run as Women and Win," *APSR* 74(1): 92–103; Virginia Sapiro, "When Are Interests Interesting: The Problem of Political Representation of Women," *APSR* 75(3): 701–16; Timothy Bledsoe and Mary Herring, "Victims of Circumstances: Women in Pursuit of Public Office," *APSR* 84(1): 213–24.

2. Christine Stansell, a prominent feminist historian, defines a gender system as "all of those arrangements of work, sexuality, parental responsibility, psychological life, assigned social traits and internalized emotions through which the sexes defined themselves respectively as men and women." *City of Women* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), p. xii.

This essay argues that feminist political scientists have failed to make the methodological transition from a focus on women (stage one) to the use of gender as a category of analysis (stage three) because of the confluence of three specific developments in the 1970s: (1) the dominance of the behavioralist paradigm in political science; (2) the professional imperatives experienced by feminist scholars entering political science at that time;³ and (3) the emergence of the feminist movement. During the 1970s, the efflorescence of political activity by women provided the terrain on which this first generation of feminist scholars was able to reconcile the competing claims of feminism and political science. The resulting "behavioralist compromise" enabled feminist political scientists to pursue research on women (stage one), but it simultaneously raised methodological obstacles to the emergence of gender as a category of analysis in political science (stage three). An alliance with the increasingly prominent historically oriented and interpretive "new institutionalism" can, I argue, provide the necessary methodological underpinnings for the emergence of gender as a category of analysis in political science.

Behavioralism and the Origins of Research on Women and Politics

Like other scholarly fields, political science research on women has moved in a cyclical fashion over the decades since the discipline was founded in the United States. During the early twentieth century, when the first wave of the feminist movement forced open higher education to women, a handful of women entered the newly established political science graduate programs at the University of Chicago, Johns Hopkins, and Columbia. These women initiated the first systematic research on women and politics as part of their social reform activities during the Progressive era (Breckinridge 1933; Fitzpatrick 1990). Research on women rapidly dwindled in the 1920s with the withdrawal of women from academic careers and political life, and virtually disappeared in the 1930s and 1940s. The most important exceptions during these years were the publication of Charles Merriam and Harold F. Gosnell's *Non-Voting: Causes and Methods of Control* (1924), which examined women's voting behavior four years after their enfranchisement, and Sophonisba Breckinridge's *Women in the Twentieth Century: A Study of Their Political, Social, and Economic Activities* (1933), written for Herbert Hoover's President's Research Committee on Social Trends.⁴ With these ex-

3. It is important to note that not all women political scientists were, or are, feminists and, second, that not all feminist political scientists were inclined to do their research on women. In this essay I am specifically referring to feminist women political scientists who sought to do research on women.

4. Breckinridge obtained a Ph.D. in political science at the University of Chicago in 1901 and a J.D. from the University of Chicago's law school in 1904. On Breckinridge, see Edith

ceptions,⁵ however, the almost exclusively male discipline of the interwar period engaged in an atheoretical “hyperfactualism” (Easton 1971) that did not even examine the fact of women’s participation in politics.⁶

The ascendance of behavioralism in the 1950s revived scholarship on women and politics, though it did not, of course, set out to do this. As postwar political scientists increasingly turned their attention to the investigation of individual and group political behavior, they invariably stumbled upon women’s extensive postwar civic activities. However, the two research traditions established during these years, the survey research studies of mass political behavior and the “community power” studies, led political scientists down well-defined methodological paths. This had distinct theoretical implications for the study of women’s political activity. In *Who Governs?* (1960), Dahl sought to challenge stratification theory, in which a socioeconomic elite was said to dominate political life. His categories of analysis therefore embraced hierarchies of power within the political arena. As a result, Dahl failed to attribute any theoretical significance to women’s prominent role in education politics in New Haven through the local Parent-Teacher Association (1960, pp. 156–58). For Dahl, the Parent-Teacher Association was just another example of the relationship between leaders and constituents in local politics.⁷ Polsby (1963) and Wolfinger (1974) similarly failed to attribute any theoretical significance to the patterns of women’s political participation they described.

By contrast, survey researchers’ methodology and research questions compelled them to focus theoretical attention on women. In *The People’s Choice* (1948), where women make their first appearance in postwar American political science, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet distinguished carefully between the sexes in their examination of the role of the family in the development of individual political attitudes (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1948, pp. 140–42). Berelson and Lazarsfeld’s next study, *Voting*

Abbott, “Sophonisba Breckinridge over the Years,” *Social Service Review* 22(4): 417–23. On the President’s Research Committee on Social Trends, see Barry Karl, “Presidential Planning and Social Science Research: Mr. Hoover’s Experts,” *Perspectives in American History* 3 (1969): 347–409.

5. There were two other notable exceptions, but they were not written by American political scientists. They were Herbert Tingsten, *Political Behavior: Studies in Election Statistics* (London: P. S. King and Sons, 1937) and Maurice Duverger, *The Political Role of Women* (Paris: UNESCO, 1955).

6. The *American Political Science Review* published only two articles on women during the interwar period, both by women: Alzada Comstock, “Women Members of European Parliaments,” *APSR* 20 (1926): 379–83; Marguerite Fisher and Betty Whitehead, “Women’s Participation in National Party Nominating Conventions, 1892–1941,” *APSR* 38 (October 1944): 395–403.

7. This point is firmly underscored by Dahl’s use of gender-neutral language; members of the PTA are most frequently referred to as “people” or “parents.”

(1954), extended this investigation of the differences between the sexes from the family into the political arena. In one of the most important theoretical innovations of this literature, *Voting* systematically examined women's behavior in a variety of political roles (e.g., as voters, party activists, and union members). By the time Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes published *The American Voter* in 1960, sex was a well-established independent variable in survey research. Between 1948 and 1972, survey research produced the first large body of systematic research on women's political behavior since the Progressive era.

This large and highly influential body of work created what I have called the "behavioralist approach" to research on women and politics. Two aspects of this approach are especially noteworthy. First, survey researchers defined women's political behavior in precisely the same terms as they did men's. They examined women's voting turnout rate, their attendance at political meetings, and their financial contributions to political campaigns. But this definition of political behavior, though ostensibly gender-neutral, was clearly based on the norm of male political behavior in the 1940s and 1950s. It excluded, for example, women's extensive political activity through civic organizations, such as the League of Women Voters or the Parent-Teacher Association. As a result, survey researchers came to view women's political behavior as inadequate and inferior to men's. Some drew a less flattering picture of "femina politica" than others. Lane (1959, pp. 209–16) concluded that women were moralistic, intolerant, uninformed, and personality- rather than issue-oriented in comparison to men. Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960, pp. 483–93) took a more sympathetic view of women's low levels of political activity, suggesting that women were unfortunate victims of lagging sex-role change.

Second, survey researchers universally agreed that sex roles were responsible for sex differences in political behavior. According to this view, female socialization fostered an interest in private and family matters, whereas male socialization fostered an interest in public, political matters. Although sex roles were not considered to be biologically mandated, survey researchers of this period believed they embodied a division of labor that was both natural and appropriate. Greater political activity by women, it was argued, would jeopardize the stability of the family and therefore of the United States. "Apolitical Woman"—with the possible exception of regular trips to the polling booth on election day—was, in fact, the bulwark of postwar American democracy.⁸ The discipline's claims to scientific objectivity notwithstanding, however, such

8. See, for example, Lane's comment on the consequences of increased political activity for women: "Would it be wise to reinforce the feminist movement, emphasizing politics on the women's page along with the garden club and bridge club news . . . ? No doubt something along

value-laden views of women's "proper place" could not flourish for long in the rapidly changing profession of the 1970s.

In the late 1960s, women began to reenter political science graduate programs in large numbers. As had happened at the turn of the century, the resurgence of the feminist movement and the growth of higher education enabled many young women to undertake advanced training in political science. Many of them were already swept up in feminist activities and others were drawn into women's liberation during their graduate school years. But although their arrival reversed the decline of the number of women granted Ph.D.'s in political science that had begun in the 1920s, this did not immediately alter the social structure of the profession. Women were still largely excluded from the most prestigious graduate schools, many received only an M.A., others taught only part time, and most were concentrated in small liberal arts colleges (especially the women's colleges), state universities, or two-year institutions where their energies were necessarily directed toward teaching rather than scholarship (Schuck 1969, 1970; Chamberlain 1988). In the face of rising expectations and blocked opportunities, these women formed part of a growing constituency available for mobilization against the established structure of the postwar profession.

In the late 1960s, a group of these women joined a number of their male colleagues in a short-lived insurgency within the American Political Science Association. The Caucus for a New Political Science, the first organized expression of discontent in the profession, made several efforts to attract women to its ranks.⁹ But neither the male-dominated caucus nor the slow-moving APSA Committee on the Status of Women, appointed by APSA President David Easton in March 1969, were able to contain women's discontent. At the APSA annual meeting in August 1969, a small group of women founded the Women's Caucus for Political Science (WCPS). Like the Caucus for a New Political Science, the women's caucus hoped to promote both intellectual and organizational change.¹⁰

these lines could be done, but it is too seldom remembered by the American society that working girls and career women, and women who insistently serve the community in volunteer capacities, and women with extracurricular interests of an absorbing kind are often borrowing their time and attention and capacity for relaxed play and love from their children to whom it rightfully belongs. As Kardiner points out, the rise of juvenile delinquency (and, he says, homosexuality) is partly to be attributed to the feminist movement and what it did to the American mother." *Political Life*, p. 355.

9. The caucus's efforts to attract women included the creation of its own Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession, chaired by Alan Wolfe, and a campaign to have the American Political Science Association establish a similar commission. See "Supplement to Professional Notes," *PS* 1 (Fall 1968): 17-18. On the rise and fall of the caucus see Lowi (1972) and Wolfe (1970).

10. On the origins and early aspirations of the Women's Caucus, see its statement in *PS* 2 (Fall 1969): 678.

The intellectual and political diversity of the women's caucus, however, worked to displace emerging theoretical debates with professional concerns. The WCPS drew its leadership from among graduate students, adjunct faculty, and part-time lecturers scattered across the subfields in the discipline. In its earliest years, the women's caucus also attracted radical and socialist feminists with ties to women's liberation as well as feminists more sympathetic to the style and goals of liberal feminism.¹¹ Since women's caucus members were linked only by their sex and their common opposition to sex discrimination in political science, the WCPS focused its attention on professional concerns. It participated in APSA elections, developed new grievance procedures, drew up sexual harassment guidelines, attacked antinepotism laws, and generally helped to lower the barriers to women's advancement in the profession.¹² But its failure to serve as a forum for scholarly debate and methodological revision left it permanently on the sidelines of new feminist intellectual developments already under way in the discipline.

In 1974, a handful of feminist political scientists began to provide the first structural critiques of behavioralist political science from a feminist perspective. Bourque and Grossholtz (1974) and Elshain (1974) challenged the idea of value-free research by attacking the sexist interpretations of women's political behavior in some of behavioralism's most influential texts. More important, these essays also exposed the male political norm that lay behind the discipline's purportedly gender-neutral categories of analysis. Political science's definition of "the political," which focused primarily on governmental institutions, formal political processes, and public policy, was especially rejected. These feminist scholars embraced the early feminist movement's central precept and challenged the discipline to expand its definition of "the political" to include "the personal." The actual content of this departure was left quite vague, but the implied research agenda pointed toward an examination of the sexual division of labor in the family, reproduction, and sexuality. It was, seemingly, a rejection of political science.

Simultaneously, a second and much larger group of women began to lay the terms of a compromise between feminism and political science. These women explicitly embraced behavioralist assumptions and methods and sought to turn them to new, feminist ends. In 1974, the first survey research studies focused solely on women voters and political elites were published (Jacquette 1974; Kirkpatrick 1974), and several more followed over the next decade (Diamond 1977; Kelly and Boutilier 1978; Sapiro 1983). In focusing

11. *Ibid.*; also Kay Klotzberger, "Political Action by Academic Women," in Alice Rossi and Anne Calderwood, eds., *Academic Women on the Move* (New York: Russell Sage, 1973). Klotzberger was a founder of the WCPS and first chair of the WCPS as well as a member of the APSA Committee on the Status of Women.

12. The activities of the WCPS can be traced in *PS*. See also the article by Klotzberger (n. 11).

specifically on women's behavior, these feminist political scientists partially departed from the research tradition established by their male predecessors. But their methodological continuity with postwar behavioralists was most striking.

Changes in the discipline in the 1970s strengthened the hand of feminists seeking a compromise¹³ with political science. Male sociologists and political scientists, such as Gamson (1975), Oberschall (1973), Lowi (1971), and Lipsky (1968), had already begun to expand political science's scholarly domain beyond the narrow limits of early behavioralism. The new definition of political behavior included the new forms of political activity characteristic of the 1960s and 1970s, such as social movements and interest groups. The expansion of the discipline's jurisdiction in this way enabled feminist political scientists to append women to mainstream research agendas without having to challenge the larger questions, categories, and models of the discipline. In 1975, the APSA gave its imprimatur to this approach by awarding the first prize for the Best Work on Women in Politics to a book that used women as a case study, employing social movement theory. Jo Freeman's *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process* consummated what I have called the "behavioralist compromise." With a few exceptions, most feminist research in the empirical subfields of political science has followed this methodological format.

During the 1980s, feminist political scientists embraced the linguistic shift from the word "sex" to the word "gender." Klein's book, titled *Gender Politics* (1984), announced the prominence of the new language in the discipline. But the shift to the new term obscured the continuity of the old methodological approach. Feminist political scientists' definition of gender simply reiterated the logic of political socialization and the assumptions of behavioralism. In a usage characteristic of feminist political scientists in the 1980s, Sapiro (1983, p. 36) explained gender as "the sociocultural manifestations of being a man or woman, . . . [the] learned significance of one's sex." Defined this way, gender remained simply an alternative term for sex roles. It did not include the key concepts of either stage-two or stage-three feminist scholarship. It did not, for example, take account of the role of power in the relations between the sexes, nor did it employ gender as a theoretical lens on political life. Thus Klein, Sapiro, and other prominent feminist political scientists in the early 1980s remained firmly within the terms of the behavioralist compromise.

13. I here use the term "compromise" in the way that political scientists have traditionally employed such terms as "class compromise" or "postwar settlement." That is, I do not in any way mean to imply self-consciously intentional acts of "compromise" on the part of feminist scholars. To the contrary, the term is meant to suggest the outcome of a historically situated, institutionally structured conflict in which both sides search for an accommodation.

It is important to note that feminist scholarly work in political theory has followed a different path over the last two decades. The postwar split between empirical political science and political theory (Gunnell 1988) provided feminist political theorists with a freedom to explore new questions and approaches denied their empirical colleagues. Within the first generation of feminist political theorists, divergent political commitments fostered two methodological trajectories. Radical and socialist feminists, who were especially attracted to the subfield in the mid-1970s, began immediately to apply their analytical tools to explaining the nature and origins of women's subordination in contemporary society. They produced several anthologies that sought to integrate Marxism and feminism into a theory explaining women's oppression under "capitalist patriarchy" (Eisenstein 1979; Sargent 1981; Hartsock 1983). At the same time, Susan Moller Okin (1979) and Jean Elshtain (1981) led scholarly efforts by liberal feminists to explore the hidden gender assumptions of the political philosophy canon. In both cases, this work involved more than simply adding women to the established research agenda in political theory. Feminist theorists focused almost immediately on the social relations between the sexes (stage two).

In contrast to developments in empirical political science, shifts in political theory in the early 1980s enabled feminist theorists to embrace gender as a category of analysis in their work. The intellectual heirs of earlier feminist scholars concerned with contemporary problems extended gender analysis to current debates about sex, abortion, and the new reproductive technologies. Feminist theorists also increasingly used gender as their analytical framework for exploring issues not obviously related to women, such as justice, rights, contract, and citizenship (Dietz 1987; Okin 1989; Pateman 1988; Sunstein 1990). As in other areas of the discipline, however, there has been insufficient dialogue between feminist political theorists and feminist empirical political scientists. As a result, the emergence of gender as a category of analysis (stage three) in the subfield of political theory has had little influence over the course of feminist empirical work, at least to date.

The frustration of feminist scholarship in political science appears especially prominent when compared to developments in the humanities. The absence of a single dominant paradigm in these disciplines in the 1970s facilitated the transition from sex to gender as a new category of analysis. As early as 1975, historian Natalie Davis encouraged her colleagues to study "the significance of the sexes" (stage two) rather than focus narrowly and separately on women (stage one) (1975, p. 90). Little more than a decade later, the publication of Joan Scott's important *AHR* essay, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" (1986), confirmed a trend already under way in the humanities. By the mid-1980s, political science was clearly lagging behind several other disciplines.

Sex and Gender in Political Science

Why were feminist political scientists unable to make the methodological transition in the 1980s to gender as a category of analysis? The answer lies in the specific historical conditions of the 1970s. The emergence of the feminist movement during that decade enabled feminist political scientists to use behavioralism to reconcile the competing claims of feminism and political science—but primarily on political science’s terms. Once in place, however, the terms of the behavioralist compromise actually prevented the emergence of gender as a category of analysis in the discipline. Gender analysis would have to wait until the historical underpinnings of the behavioralist compromise began to erode in the mid-1980s.

Postwar behavioralists incorporated women into their research by introducing sex as an independent variable into the lexicon of political science. This approach to research on women was directly derived from the basic methodological assumptions of their paradigm. Behavioralists insisted that interests and preferences determining political behavior were exogenous to the political system. They simply extended this general principle to the differences in political behavior their studies revealed (or, more precisely, constructed) between men and women. As Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960, pp. 484–85) argued:

The basic differences that mark the political participation of men and women we take to lie in vestigial sex roles. . . . A sex role for political behavior includes, then, that portion of expectations about behavior proper for a male or female that involves political responses. A century ago political sex roles were clear-cut. A man was supposed to be the political agent for the family unit. A woman not only had no need to concern herself with politics; to one degree or another, political activity was unseemly for her. . . . Yet social roles are deeply ingrained in day-to-day assumptions about behavior in any culture, and these assumptions are not rapidly uprooted. Decades after the first successes of the suffragettes many wives wish to refer our interviewers to their husbands as being the person in the family who pays attention to politics. Or the woman may say in so many words: “I don’t know anything about politics—I thought that business was for men, anyway.”

Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes merely assumed a causal relationship between sex roles and political behavior; *The American Voter* provided no direct evidence for this linkage. The emergence of “political socialization” as a subspecialty in American politics in the early 1960s provided the key, purportedly “scientific” evidence of causality between sex role socialization

and political behavior.¹⁴ Thus a fully formulated and widely accepted approach to research on women was available when the first generation of feminists entered the discipline in the late 1960s.

Behavioralism proved to be highly receptive to their efforts to reconcile their feminist and professional commitments. These women could not simply embrace the behavioralist tradition as formulated by their male predecessors, since the pre-1970 scholarship clearly subordinated women's political behavior to larger, ostensibly gender-neutral questions about "How the Voter Makes up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign," "Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign," or "Why People Get Involved in Politics."¹⁵ Determined to bring women's political behavior out from under the shadows of postwar behavioralism, this first generation of feminist political scientists turned the behavioralist approach on its side: they applied behavioralist assumptions and research tools specifically to women's burgeoning political activity in the 1970s.

The resurgence of the feminist movement in the public debates of the 1970s was thus the key historical condition that made possible what I have called the behavioralist compromise. Women's extensive political activity in the 1950s through voluntary, nonpartisan, civic associations, such as the Parent-Teacher Association and the League of Women Voters, had fallen outside the channels of politics for which the categories of behavioralism had been constructed. Thus the politically active women of the 1950s and 1960s had been judged less political than men by the political scientists of those years. But during the late 1960s, women's political behavior began spilling out of the domain of voluntary association into political channels, which behavioralist categories could register as political activity. The founding of the National Organization for Women in 1966 and the Women's Strike for Equality in 1970, the creation of the National Women's Political Caucus in 1971, the election of several new women to Congress in 1972, and the initiation of organized lobbying for new public policies for women indicated the growing convergence of the bases and forms of men's and women's political behavior. Women could therefore simply be added to established research agendas on social movements, interest groups, electoral politics, congressional politics, political elites, and so on. Not surprisingly, the first published research of this first generation included studies of women party activists, women voters, and women state legislators (Kirkpatrick 1974; Jacqueline 1974; Diamond 1977). The feminist movement outside the academy thus made it possible for femi-

14. For a brief early history of this subspecialty, see Fred Greenstein, *Children and Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, rev. ed., 1979), pp. 5–15.

15. These are the subtitles of Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, *The People's Choice* (1948); Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, *Voting* (1954); and Lane, *Political Life* (1959), respectively.

nist political scientists to accept (indeed, enthusiastically embrace) the terms of behavioralism and to carve out a new field of scholarly expertise called “women and politics.”

Once in place, the behavioralist compromise was sustained by the particular distribution of its benefits. It enabled feminist political scientists to reconcile their feminism with the imperatives of professional advancement. The new field of women and politics permitted feminists to claim a special place for themselves in political science departments. The behavioralist compromise was also good for the feminist movement. Few feminist organizations and nonuniversity research centers were financially able to develop the in-house technical expertise necessary to pursue their electoral, legal, and policy activities. The behavioralist compromise enabled them to rely on feminist political scientists to supply the needed data on women’s political behavior. Feminist political scientists were, of course, happy to oblige.

But the behavioralist compromise benefitted political science as a discipline most of all. It increased political science’s legitimacy by implicitly confirming the claim that its methods, assumptions, and categories were neutral, universal, and objective, permitting all groups to be studied equally. In exchange, the discipline acknowledged women as a valid research subject, precisely because feminist researchers accepted and used the methods and techniques of behavioralist political science in their work. In 1983, the APSA published a five-volume series of review essays, sample syllabi, and suggested readings to assist faculty in integrating women into the political science teaching curriculum (APSA 1983).

Finally, the behavioralist compromise flourished between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s because it had uncontested explanatory power for the specific research questions feminist political scientists asked during these years. The emergence in the public world of feminist interest groups, feminist electoral activities, feminist legal battles, and feminist lobbying for new public policies for women excited feminist political scientists and demanded scholarly attention. But the particular methodological orientation of the feminist research agenda of the past two decades cannot be viewed as a simple and straightforward response to the efflorescence of women’s political activity in the 1970s and 1980s. It was also a function of the behavioralist training feminist political scientists had themselves received. Feminist scholars who adopted the behavioralist paradigm found, not surprisingly, that the questions they were able to ask were particularly well answered in behavioralist terms. But this did not mean that they were the best or the sole research questions feminist political scientists could ask.

Feminist political scientists paid a high price for the emergence of the behavioralist compromise. The behavioralist compromise had restricted the development of feminist scholarship in three significant ways. First, it had

severely limited the dialogue between political scientists and scholars in other disciplines interested in gender studies. Though feminist political scientists had produced an enormous body of research on women and politics, this work was methodologically incompatible with the standards of women's studies research. It was therefore of limited interest to other feminist scholars, most of whom were now attuned to work employing gender as a category of analysis. At the same time, feminist political scientists did not generally benefit from the rich interdisciplinary debates in women's studies. As women's studies research became increasingly sophisticated and more deeply committed to gender as a category of analysis, the theoretical gap between political scientists and other feminist scholars grew increasingly large.

Second, the behavioralist compromise had also limited feminist political scientists' dialogue with other political scientists. Feminist scholars were hard-pressed to demonstrate their contribution to political science's body of theoretical knowledge. The behavioralist compromise had provided feminist scholars with a new area of expertise, but few made any claims to a distinct body of theory. Nor were feminist scholars able to apply the methods of the behavioralist compromise in a way that substantially challenged existing empirical political science theories. From Freeman's *Politics of Women's Liberation* in 1975 to the most recent studies by Klein (1984), Sapiro (1983), Katzenstein and Mueller (1987), the empirical feminist scholarly tradition in the discipline was more likely to apply, than revise, theories current in the discipline.

Finally, the behavioralist compromise limited feminist political scientists' dialogue with each other as scholars. As a research approach, it proved unable to unify feminist political scientists into an influential intellectual force in the discipline. By its very logic, which subordinated the study of women to the conceptual terms of behavioralism, the behavioralist compromise scattered feminist scholars across the subfields of political science. It also enjoined them to address their work to these subfields, rather than toward any common feminist theoretical concerns. The expansion of work on women therefore led to a large but fragmented literature on women and politics, which reproduced itself as new graduate students interested in pursuing research on women were themselves dispersed across the discipline's subfields.¹⁶

Some of these concerns were raised in a steady stream of review essays and articles in the late 1970s (Boals 1975; Jacquette 1976; Carroll 1979). There was unanimous agreement on the importance of the new data collected,

16. For the past several years, the fall issue of *PS* has listed political science dissertations in preparation. A quick glance reveals that projects on women are scattered across the subfields and seem to have more in common with other projects in their subfield than with each other.

but many feminist political scientists expressed concern about the weak theoretical contribution this work was making to the discipline. As the conditions underpinning the behavioralist compromise eroded in the mid-1980s, however, the way has been opened for feminists in the discipline to forge a new compromise with political science.

Toward Gender as a Category of Analysis in Political Science

In the early 1980s, political science entered a period of methodological flux. As the behavioralist paradigm's influence finally waned, the conditions that had sustained the academic settlement between feminists and political science for almost two decades also began to erode. The time is now ripe for feminist political scientists to renegotiate the terms of understanding between feminism and the discipline. Although a number of alternative paradigms are now available, an alliance with the historically oriented, interpretive "new institutionalism" would, I believe, provide the firmest methodological footing for the emergence of gender as a category of analysis in political science. This would, in turn, help revitalize feminist scholarship in the discipline.

In the early 1980s, the three pillars supporting the behavioralist compromise began to crumble. First, what remained of the behavioralist paradigm came under renewed fire from two distinct intellectual approaches in the discipline that both claimed the name of the "new institutionalism." New institutionalist critiques of behavioralism differed from those associated with the Caucus for a New Political Science and were far more successful in undermining behavioralism's power, because they focused on its methodological assumptions rather than its alleged irrelevance. Scholars working in both the formal or rational-choice new institutionalist tradition, as well as those working in the historical and interpretive new institutionalist tradition, attacked behavioralism for its failure to consider the institutional constraints on individual choice and collective decision making (McCubbins and Sullivan 1987; Riker 1983; Skowronek 1982; Weir, Orloff, and Skocpol 1988). Although there continues to be debate over whether the new institutionalism constitutes the paradigm shift some of its advocates have claimed (Almond 1988), March and Olsen's pioneering essay in the *American Political Science Review* announced the emergence of a new scholarly impulse—if not a full-fledged new paradigm—in the discipline (March and Olsen 1984).

By the early 1980s, the second and third pillars supporting the behavioralist compromise also began to crumble. Feminists entering political science in the early 1980s were far less inclined than their predecessors to commit themselves to research on women in politics. Like many of the men in their cohort, this second generation of feminist political scientists was attracted to

the new and unusually exciting developments occurring around the world. By contrast, the feminist movement in the United States, particularly after 1982, grew increasingly moribund. Not only did this deter new feminist political scientists from pursuing feminist scholarship, it also significantly reduced the range of topics that could be assimilated to the behavioralist compromise. Although the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment and the emergence of a "gender gap" in voting patterns in the early 1980s generated a spurt of research on these topics (Klein 1984; Mueller 1988; Mansbridge 1986; Hoff-Wilson 1986), the decline of feminist activity in the public arena significantly reduced the feminist agenda in political science. By comparison to the 1970s, however, feminist political scientists published only a limited number of books and articles in the 1980s.

The current weakness of the behavioralist compromise, and the present methodological flux in the discipline more generally, provides feminist political scientists with an unusual opportunity to rethink the future direction of feminist scholarship in the discipline. In my opinion, an alliance with the historically oriented, interpretive new institutionalism would provide the best possibility for the revitalization of feminist scholarship in political science. Specifically, the underlying methodological assumptions of this approach are uniquely compatible with the "social constructionist" impulse at the heart of women's studies. Unlike behaviorism or rational choice, the historically oriented, interpretive new institutionalism assumes that preferences are endogenous to (that is, constructed in) politics. Accordingly, politics could be understood not simply as the "authoritative allocation of values" (Easton 1971) or the process through which "who gets what, when, how" (Lasswell 1936). Politics could also be viewed as a primary mechanism through which definitions of womanhood and manhood are defined, sexuality is conceptualized, and reproductive activity delineated.

Gender as a category of analysis has the potential to open each of the three dialogues that the behavioralist compromise foreclosed in the 1970s. First, feminist political scientists would be able to participate more fully in the interdisciplinary debates of women's studies. The mechanisms through which gender is constructed would no longer seem to lay outside the political arena as they had under the terms of the behavioralist compromise. Thus feminist political scientists would be able to enrich women's studies' understanding of the origin and dynamics of gender systems by modifying the society-oriented perspective it inherited from social history.

Second, gender as a category of analysis would open an equally rich, and long-needed, dialogue between feminist political scientists and others in the discipline. As a new theoretical lens through which subjects of long-standing interest to political scientists could be examined, gender as a category of analysis could help place the social relations between the sexes at the center of

the discipline's research agenda. Recent work by Skocpol and Ritter (1991), Nelson (1990), and Sapiro (1986), for example, has clearly demonstrated the constitutive role of gender relations and ideologies in the administrative distinctions between the contributory social insurance approach of workmen's compensation (intended primarily for men) and the means-tested approach to Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), intended primarily for women. Clearly, many additional areas of interest to political scientists invite a gender analysis.¹⁷

Finally, gender as a category of analysis would help foster a more fruitful conversation among feminist political scientists. Under the terms of the behaviorist compromise, feminist scholars' dispersion across the subfields fragmented feminist scholarship both substantively and theoretically. By contrast, gender as a category of analysis could unite feminist political scientists by providing common methodological ground for scholars with different substantive interests. Just as the methodology of rational choice has enabled political scientists working in different subfields to pursue a common theoretical agenda and, perhaps more importantly, to establish a recognized and influential intellectual community in the discipline, gender as a category of analysis would foster closer intellectual cooperation among feminist scholars.

Conclusion

From the outset, the goal of feminist scholarship has been to change existing structures of knowledge, not simply to add women to established research agendas. This goal has been easier to realize in the humanities than in the social sciences. In political science, the convergence of the behavioral revolution in postwar political science, the professional and political concerns of feminist political scientists in the 1970s, and the emergence of the feminist movement provided the conditions for a rather uneasy settlement between feminism and political science for more than two decades. But short-term legitimacy for feminist scholarship was clearly gained at the expense of long-term theoretical significance. Gaining legitimacy for research on women is inherently linked to a methodological challenge this work did not, and could not, raise.

Feminist scholarship in political science does not require abandoning fundamental presuppositions of political science, such as positivism, hypothesis-testing, and the requirement of falsifiability, as some feminist

17. For purposes of my argument, feminist scholars do not necessarily need to subscribe (implicitly or explicitly) to the new institutionalism. My point is simply that the growing prominence of the new institutionalism has created a much more sympathetic intellectual environment for scholarly work employing gender as a category of analysis.

critics of social science have suggested. Rather, broader use of gender as a category of analysis in political science would open the way for a compromise between feminism and political science on terms that would enrich both feminist scholarship and political science.

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