

Gender in the Aggregate, Gender in the Individual, Gender and Political Action

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Gender in the Aggregate, Gender in the Individual, Gender and Political Action

The literature on gender and political action comes in two forms – one that is aggregate, sometimes institutional, and often centered historically, and one that is individual and largely focused on the here and now. We care about both, of course – about the social organization and deployment of gender and about what it means in individual lives. In this paper, I argue that we should encourage these two kinds of analysis to engage each other more intimately.

Why? Macro-analysis has the advantage of offering smoother data, data in which it's easier to see broad structural trends. If gender is a property of groups and systems, as I believe it is (we might make gender up as we go, but that idiosyncratic sort of gender wouldn't offer the same sort of systematic disadvantage that coordinated answers to what gender is offer, and so we wouldn't care as much), then aggregate and systemic analyses put it easily on display. These more macro, aggregate, or institutional analyses also have the (often underused) potential to keep the context of politics and policy in front of us.

There are disadvantages to this form of analysis, as well. This literature almost always runs at the elite level or with archival data, and so, like archaeological work in general, it runs the risk of missing systemic features of the lives of ordinary people because the remains of the activities of ordinary people have often been discarded. With aggregate or macro analysis, it's next-to-impossible to see individual-level mechanisms in action, and so psychological and some sociological mechanisms can only be distantly inferred. Often, with historical analysis, there's only one piece of data, one way history happened, and so it's hard to know, for sure, what would have happened if this or that factor had been otherwise.

By contrast, individual-level analysis expands our theoretical toolkit by giving us access to psychological and sociological mechanisms. This level of analysis gives us more than one data point. Instead of having to rely solely on our imagination for counterfactuals, we are often offered explicit realizations of the counterfactuals we imagine. But it's easy for analyses at this level to have trouble putting gender on display, partly because of the aggregate construction of gender, partly because of the explicit work one has to do to incorporate context and history, and partly because analyses at this level have to incorporate theory and measures that tie these individual-level data to the social phenomenon of gender. Right now, these theories and measures must largely come from psychology and sociology.

The gender and politics literature isn't the only literature to face the problem of locating a social construction in individual lives, of linking aggregate and individual analyses. The literature on race and politics faces an identical problem (see, for example, the discussion in Brubaker and Cooper 2000 on race and identity). But there are ways the race and politics literature has moved faster than the gender literature to allow linkages between

aggregate and individual-level analyses, mostly because scholars there moved faster to incorporate individual-level psychological conceptualizations of race into their analyses, especially their analyses of public opinion. I mean here: racism, Black Nationalism, and the like.¹

I suspect this difference between the literature on race and the literature on gender in politics has two roots. First off, American history has made it easier and more obvious to take up questions of race than questions of gender: race has been a key feature, a key driving force, of the American political tradition. This doesn't mean that gender has been absent from American political history. It has just often been off-stage, in action in everyday life – in the understanding of women's fitness for political roles, in the ways institutions outside of politics allocate advantages to men. Politics has built assumptions about women's place into policy.²

And, second, gender is organized largely through integration, whereas race is organized through separation. This means that gender works more subtly often, and it means that studying gender policy and studying women's action are pretty different activities because women are systematically on different sides of political battles about gender. By contrast, race in America works blatantly, and African-Americans are a more unified force in politics.

This integration, this intimacy, makes for invisibility in a number of ways. Because of it, there's probably not as much systematic violence as with other hierarchies, and so the hierarchy sometimes works more subtly. By working often through psychological intimidation, coercion, and acquiescence, gender hierarchies are recipes for the morselization of experience, for enabling people to explain any individual outcome as the product of individual and idiosyncratic circumstance and not as a consequence of large-scale structural forces like discrimination. To be visible, these cumulated wrongs must be added up – either over institutions or over time. A single snapshot can miss them unless it is viewed in the context of a structural account of disadvantage. Otherwise, disadvantage may be hard to see and easy to explain away. Without one of these two approaches – adding up or setting within a structural account – disadvantage, even disadvantage that is perpetrated with violence, can seem like a choice. (In some sense, that's the burden of MacKinnon's arguments about difference and dominance (MacKinnon, 1987).)

Studies of gender and politics at the individual level are advantaged in one sense: women and men are present in large numbers in any national data set (despite the wishes of the early pollsters (Berinsky 2005)). Members of ethnic and racial minorities add up to small numbers in these same data sets, and that makes trouble for scientific inference. It's not, then, that women and men aren't there, but data sets often haven't explicitly included

¹ In contrast with a weakness in bringing in psychological concepts, the gender literature has done good work to draw the sociological literature into the literature on gender and participation

² Studying gender and politics reminds me most of studying class in America, and like that literature, we would do well to think even more about ways to study silences.

theoretical tools to use to think about gender. There are exceptions: Patricia Gurin's pioneering instrumentation on the 1972 National Election Study, instrumentation that laid the foundation for thinking about gender consciousness; Conover's and Sapiro's work on gender and interdependence in the NES in the 1990s; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady's inclusion of questions about gender in many realms of civic life in the Citizen Participation Study.

In the remainder of this paper, I take up specific literatures on gender and political action, with these organizing thoughts about the literature to guide me. The ground I have just covered is an outline of my aspirations for the aggregate and individual literatures on political action. In reality, of course, neither literature takes full advantage of the opportunities provided by the level of analysis in which the scholar is working. I hope that scholars will do that – becoming even more self-conscious of the promise of the research space in which they're operating. And I hope that a richer conversation will grow up between scholars working in aggregate and individual parts of the field because I believe that will lead to new theorizing and new progress in the field and open the possibility for a dynamic account of gender and political action, one that takes mechanisms offered up by sociology and psychology and interacts them fully with theorized political contexts.

Before There Was a Literature: The Early History of the Study of Gender and Participation.

Of course, scholars noticed gender differences in political action early on, before scholars viewed themselves as contributing to a literature on the topic, before scholars thought to cite one another on the subject of gender and political action. Tocqueville thought that, "In America, more anywhere else in the world, care has been taken constantly to trace clearly distinct spheres of action for the two sexes" (601), and that division of labor he admired so much meant that American women would never be found "interfering in politics" (601). He celebrated women's absence as the perfect embodiment of separate but equal. By the early part of the twentieth century, scholars had come to view women's lower level of political action as a problem instead of a cause for celebration. Merriam's and Gosnell's (1929) study of non-voting worried about women's "civic slothfulness," what they saw as the unfortunately low priority women placed on voting (women who didn't vote because their children were sick were slothful, whereas men who didn't vote because they had business meetings were away on business).

By the 1940s, scholars had more elaborate ideas about gender. Teams of scholars were taking the question up in a more sustained way, despite the fact that they still weren't self-conscious of creating a literature. One team in particular, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, used puzzles that emerged when thinking about men and women to shape a general approach to understanding the relationship between political interest and political action. In their 1944 book, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet examined the relationship between gender and political interest and found that women are somewhat less interested in the 1940 campaign than are men. For all respondents, lack of interest translated into

identical patterns of non-voting – among those with different levels of education, different economic resources, different ages, different religions, and the like. But, as Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet pointed out, “the result is startlingly different for the sex of the respondents” (1944, 48). They continued:

“Sex is the only personal characteristic which affects non-voting, even if interest is held constant. Men are better citizens but women are more reasoned: if they are not interested, they do not vote...If a woman is not interested, she just feels that there is no reason why she should vote. A man, however, is under more social pressure and will therefore go to the polls even if he is not ‘interested’ in the events of the campaign” (1944, 48-49).

Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1952) took this idea, developed to think about gender, and apply it more broadly in their study of the 1948 election. By this point, they had become interested in the contrast between the social forces and the political forces that make people want to be or have to be interested in politics (1952, 25-27). The expectations that grow out of social factors – like sex or education – were constant, they found, but these expectations were often overshadowed by the ways politics itself made some people want to be interested. There were strong differences between men’s and women’s levels of interest before the campaign. By the end of the campaign, those differences collapsed (28). From the perspective of 2006, the most interesting things about these analyses are the presumption that it’s men who are odd and the idea that one would take a puzzle generated by an analysis of gender and use it to change analyses more generally.

Other scholars also took up the question of gender and political action in ways we might admire today. Duverger (1955) framed his comparative examination of gender and political action with de Beauvoir (in French, and that matters) in mind. He thought about individual-level and elite-level differences between women and men and found greater differences at the elite than at the mass level. He used de Beauvoir’s analysis to think about why this was and how this might change. He said, “The small part played by women in politics merely reflects and results from the secondary place to which they are still assigned by the customs and attitudes of our society and which their education and training tend to make them accept as the natural order of things” (1955, 130). He thought real change would come after people succeeded in discursive work, in destroying the “deeply-rooted belief in the natural inferiority of women” (130).

In 1960, using data from the Michigan Election Studies, Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes continued the focus on the social expectations for political interest and action for men and women. They worried that “social roles are deeply ingrained in day-to-day assumptions about behavior in any culture, and these assumptions are not rapidly uprooted” (484). They imagined a good deal of variation in the definition of these social roles. They expected that social change might start among those with the most education. They expect regional differences. They found that “the increase in participation with education is steeper for women than for men” (485); there was a large difference between women and men with little education and hardly any difference among those with a good

deal of education. The differences were smaller in metropolitan areas. There were no differences among “younger people who are single or married without children” (487). They went on to say that mothers of young children were not less interested in politics than other women; it’s just that they had more trouble translating interest into action. They asked what’s likely to happen in the future and argued that there were countervailing possibilities. Higher education would erode differences, they thought. There’s a chance for diffusion of roles to more rural areas. But small children, they thought, might continue to keep women from political action (488-489). They worried, too, about what they saw as the weaker political efficacy, political engagement, and political sophistication of women and imagined the roots of this to rest in social expectations about women’s and men’s roles.³

These early analyses, especially those of Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, are, to my mind, an underappreciated model for later work – in the way they pay attention to political context and use context to build specific observable implications, in the way they resist assuming men are the norm, in the way they use gender to build analyses that incorporate women and men, and in the way they use results about gender to shape their thinking about other social factors. Other early analysts – Key comes sadly to mind – seemed to allow more sexist frameworks to keep them from taking their work on gender very seriously.

More Recent Literature: Participation & Civic Engagement

More recently, scholarly analyses of gender and political activity have continued to report small but persistent sex differences in overall levels of political activity. Contrary to Tocqueville’s expectation, this small gender gap in participation is, it seems, narrower in

³ In a more modest analysis with roots in (but not cites to) the earlier Berelson analyses, V.O. Key (1964) showed that women had lower levels of issue familiarity than did men. And, he “Even among women who rank high on the scale of political activity, issue familiarity is far lower than among men with the same level of political participation” (186). He worried that “the grant of the franchise to women equipped them with the legal right to vote but not necessarily with the motivation, interest, or information to do so” (331). Nevertheless, he finds that education makes the gap in voting disappear (331).

Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet also find that some women “actually consider their aloofness [from politics] a virtue” (1944, 49). The authors also take up the way political discussion works in the family – between husbands and wives and parents and children. They find considerable agreement between husbands and wives. In results that are replicated some 60 years later, husbands talk politics with many people, while wives talk politics with their husbands.

Campbell and Kahn (1952) wonder whether socio-economic differences in turnout are greater for women than for men, but they don’t pursue this line of thinking (nor do they cite earlier literature).

the U.S. than in other countries (Christy 1987; Verba, Nie, Kim, and Shabad 1978). Scholars have been developing a mostly structural story of constraint, located in institutions outside of politics.

Scholars have offered four major explanations for women's slightly lower levels of political participation in the United States – all centered on the heterogeneous, but systematic ways gender structures individual lives. One explanation is squarely sociological. The other three move between sociology and psychology. All four are foreshadowed in the early thinking on gender and participation. First, scholars have suggested that the difference is a consequence of resource disparities between women and men. Earlier work focused on income and education (Welch 1977); later work looked at a wider array of resources, ranging from institutionally acquired skills to free time to the control of money at home (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 1997, 2001). Second, scholars thought that women might participate at lower levels than men because marriage, motherhood, and homemaking socialize women out of politics (Andersen 1975; Welch 1977; Jennings and Niemi 1981; Sapiro 1983). Third, scholars have asked whether childhood socialization depresses women's political involvement (Welch 1977). Finally, scholars have examined the role of perspectives on gender roles as a cause of political activity; this explanation is often linked to adult or childhood socialization (Sapiro 1983; Clark and Clark 1986; Tolleson-Rinehart 1992). All four of these explanations locate gender outside of politics and political contexts.

The cumulative results of the investigations of these hypotheses have been mixed, in part, I think, because there hasn't been much systematic attention to political contexts in which we would expect these hypotheses to have force. Women's employment mattered in the earlier investigations (Andersen 1975; Welch 1977); it seemed to matter less or have mixed effects in later investigations (Jennings and Niemi 1981; Beckwith 1986; Tolleson-Rinehart 1992). Education has almost always helped women; however, the gender-based education differential has been persistently narrowing (Welch 1977). At times ideology mattered, with liberal, less traditional, or more gender-conscious women participating at higher levels (Andersen 1975; Sapiro 1983; Clark and Clark 1986; Tolleson-Rinehart 1992). Under some conditions, women's roles have influenced their political involvements (Jennings and Niemi 1981; Sapiro 1983; Clark and Clark 1986). I think it's time to re-examine questions about the ways politics and history might make some explanations work at some times and not; it's time to rework sociological and psychological conceptions with politics in mind.

Early scholars (that is, scholars in the 1980s) yearned for data on the details of institutional experiences, especially for details about the workplace, in order to move farther from the dichotomy of gender and toward a differentiated view of the processes that come to make sex matter (Andersen and Cook 1985:622). These scholars built a field by creatively and opportunistically making do with the data available on employment, housewife status, parenthood, marriage, education, beliefs about women's place, and gender consciousness to test complex theoretical ideas about the relationship between gender and political participation. With the advent of data sets containing much more detail on experiences in the workplace and in the family, scholars have been able to

broaden their investigations to examine more fully the sociological, structural mechanisms that link gender with political involvement (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001). They have been able to ask, in more detail, whether and how inequality at home shapes political participation. They found that division of labor doesn't seem to matter directly. For women, what does seem to matter is participating in the process of decisionmaking within the family, and for men, what matters, alas, is being in control at home (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 1997, 2001). In the end, the current account on the table is one of small cumulative differences in resources growing out of a host of institutions, in childhood and in adulthood. Women have access to lower levels of education and income. But they are also tremendously disadvantaged – and men are tremendously advantaged – by the ways gender links the home and the workplace, putting men in and keeping more than a few women out of the workplace. The workplace goes further than that to disadvantage women; in particular, workplaces allocate their benefits – money, politically relevant skills, and mobilization – on the basis of gender. Marital status and children do not have a direct impact on political participation in the cross-section, but they do have an indirect effect. For women, the indirect effect comes largely from the ways large-scale division of labor at home keeps some women with small children out of the workforce. For men, the indirect effects come from advantages to men, advantages that come from the ways children encourage men's workforce *and* religious participation. The story has come to center on the way gender links institutions and on the centrality of gender to institutions outside of politics. The current story, then, draws less on psychological mechanisms than it might (though see the discussion below on consciousness) and centers its understanding of gender sociologically, and it notices the differences between politics and other domains of life. This literature hasn't yet achieved Duverger's aspiration for a dynamic account, one that theorizes how women's and men's levels of political action have changed over time (one could think about Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Berry; and Rosenstone and Hansen for two possible ways to begin to build a more dynamic story).

Women have, of course, been involved in non-political civic life for a very long time, and their presence in these institutions – institutions that are often sex-segregated, that often enable women to take on serious leadership roles in a way that less segregated institutions have not -- has given them access to resources.⁴ And their movement between civic spaces has been well documented in the literature (Cott 1977; Davis 1981; Giddings 1984; Greenberg 2001; Harris 1999; Lerner 1979; Scott 1984). These non-political civic spaces have often provided the skills and mobilization to bring women and men to politics (Tate 1991, 1994; Harris 1994, 1999; Walton 1985).

There are large puzzles remaining. The first goes back to the earliest studies of gender and political action and that is the puzzle of women's low psychological involvement with politics, or, put the other way, the way Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet would have preferred, men's high level of psychological involvement with politics. Evidence of these different levels of psychological involvement with politics is abundant (Delli

⁴ One early research strategy to equalize women's and men's levels of political action was to redefine political action to incorporate the sorts of activities in this paragraph. Because men participate in these kinds of activities as well, that strategy didn't succeed.

Carpini and Keeter 1996; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1993; Bennett and Bennett 1989; Andersen 1975; Baxter and Lansing 1983; Beckwith 1986; Tolleson Rinehart 1992; Sapiro 1983; Soule and McGrath 1977; Rapoport 1985; Rapoport 1982). The most successful recent efforts to understand women's lower levels of political engagement have turned to look at politics itself, at the paucity of elite women in politics, especially. Through both longitudinal and cross-sectional analyses, these efforts have suggested that the presence of women in visible political positions engages women citizens (Verba, Burns, and Scholzman 1997; Burns, Scholzman, and Verba 2001; Hansen 1996; Sapiro and Conover 1997). McDermott (1997) makes a compelling case for the role candidate gender plays in low-information elections, demonstrating the power candidate gender has in shaping vote choice when citizens know little about a candidate. And Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) explore the traits and issue competencies that women and men have in mind when faced with cues from candidate gender; their work suggests that traits – such as compassion and trustworthiness – might be at the center of people's interpretation of gender in the electoral context (see, too, Kahn 1992). Stenner (2001) goes farther than this to show that women faced with strong female candidates gain self-esteem and self-confidence. This self-esteem and confidence lead to an increase in their political knowledge and interest. In Stenner's experiments, men experience exactly the opposite outcome when faced with strong women candidates: they tune out. Work by Kahn suggests that the media has historically covered women candidates less well than men candidates (Kahn 1994) and that this difference in coverage may make women candidates seem less viable (Kahn 1992, 1994). Scholars have also grown concerned about the measurement of political engagement, worrying especially that measures of political information designed to encourage people not to guess actually only discourage women from guessing (Mondak and Creel). This line of work offers increasingly tight linkages to the psychological literatures that can help sort through the mechanisms that might enable women candidates to engage women (and possibly disengage men) with the political system, mechanisms that move the literature to a clearer view of contingency and variability. In addition, because the gap in engagement appears to open well before women and men are settled into adulthood, we'll want to turn back to consider childhood. We are in a position, now, I think, to develop a contingent account of gender and childhood socialization to politics. This puzzle pushes us, I think, to theorize political contexts more thoroughly, noticing how aggregate opportunities for interest and disinterest are created politically and how those opportunities change over time and space. This puzzle is a perfect opportunity to draw insights from the macro literature I'll talk about next into individual-level analyses.

Another puzzle centers the comparative study of gender and political action. There is not as much work as I'd like developing the theoretical and empirical bases for a comparative and intersectional account of women's and men's participation. Such an account would require theorizing political contexts. Consider, for example, Asian-American women's political participation. As Junn has pointed out using aggregate analysis, basic resource-based models of the constraints on political action – models focusing on education and income -- seem to do a poor job of accounting for Asian-American women's levels of political activity (Junn 1997). Consider, as well, the work of scholars studying Arab-American women's political action (Lin and Jamal 1998), demonstrating the

consequences of the organization of Arab-American interest groups for women's and men's political action. There are hints about how a fully comparative analysis would go: building on the emerging literature on Black women's and Latinas' political activity (Baxter and Lansing 1983; Welch and Secret 1981; Fulenwider 1981; Hardy-Fanta 1993; Harmon-Martin 1994; Ardrey 1994; Jones-Correa), Burns, Schlozman, and Verba (2001) suggested that the constraints many Black women and Latinas face are located in the institutions outside of politics. Inequality, they suggest, accumulates for these women almost everywhere, in almost every institution, sometimes along lines of gender (treating most women in these groups in more or less similar ways), sometimes along the lines of race or ethnicity, always along the lines of class, and sometimes in inventive combinations. The one clear exception to this story comes from the participatory benefits religious institutions provide to Black women's political action. Payne's (1995) work on the early, rural Civil Rights Movement also has things to offer here: pointing (as do Lin and Jamal 1998) to the incentive structures embedded in social organization, to the central role of surprising networks, and to the problem for Black women's activism that arises when actors outside the movement assume that women can't be leaders and go in search of Black men to speak for the movement.

Scholars in this literature have started to build the links between individuals and institutions, individuals and political contexts, to build accounts of structure and agency together. While the literature began with a focus on role expectations, it's come more recently to focus on stratification systems embedded in a host of institutions. And it's just now—in the literature on political engagement – revisiting more psychological conceptions of gender, reviving more psychological ways to connect the property of groups to individual lives. The mechanisms and puzzles in this literature have a lot to offer the macro-level literature on gender and action. The task for scholars, now, is to develop an account of individual-level action that draws more explicit mechanisms from politics itself and from individual-level theorizing about gender. There are two directions one could go to find the comparative leverage necessary for such an account – over groups (so a comparative study of hierarchies) or over time.

Social Movements: Action in the Aggregate

What have scholars found in this literature? I'll start with a place in the literature that has a good deal in common with explanations currently in style in the individual-level literature.

Social movement scholars have shown that women's movements, like most social movements, depend heavily on indigenous – pre-existing, sex-segregated – organizations and networks. We have seen this over and over again: in Jo Freeman's (1975) path-breaking work on the networks that enabled the modern women's movement; in Nancy Cott's (1977) book on the ways in which women used the skills and arguments they developed within religious institutions to move to public work on social reform; in Jane Mansbridge's (1986) arguments about the mobilizing advantages of anti-ERA forces compared with pro-ERA activists; Matthews' and Dehart's (1992) engrossing account of the whole range of networks upon which anti-ERA activists could draw. Of course, this

reliance on indigenous organizations is a general result about social movements (McAdam 1982). What is perhaps especially interesting is the repeated reliance on an institutional space in which women have been especially active (though not always especially honored): religious institutions. Organizers have been quite creative: they have drawn upon religious institutions to craft a wide range of women's movements. Women seem to have only fleeting opportunities – like those Freeman (1975) outlines – to draw on other kinds of indigenous institutions. Women's movements that haven't been able to rely, for the long term, on the grassroots support provided through indigenous institutions have sometimes ended up relying on a small group of activists, for good or ill (Mansbridge 1986). Of course, other social movements – movements not focused on gender – that rely on indigenous organizations often end up reproducing the gender hierarchies within those organizations (see, for example, Cohen's (1999) discussion of gay and lesbian activists' efforts to be heard in modern Black politics and Payne's (1995) investigation of women's activism within the early, rural Civil Rights Movement). There are hints in this literature about what might be special about women's indigenous institutions, about the difficulty – striking in comparison with race – of finding a segregated space in which to build consciousness and resources. I take this part of the field to be an example of the good that can come from a conversation between the aggregate and individual analyses of gender. The macro-level literature offers accounts of the ways these institutions construct gender, accounts that have been put to good use in the micro-level literature.

Women have often been able to turn arguments others make to limit their roles to their own purposes, exploiting those arguments to open up more spaces for political power. Women's abilities to do this are enhanced because accounts of gender – unlike accounts of some other group-based hierarchies – are nuanced and well-developed in political life (for the strongest elaboration of this argument, comparing the possibilities of this strategy for women, Blacks, the working class, and Jews, see Herzog 1998; for other important versions of this account, see Cott 1975 and Bederman 1995). One could imagine using the work here to theorize political contexts for individual-level analysis.

In addition to subverting arguments others make to limit their roles, women have also been able to use small grants of power or standing within institutions to push for change. They have used the space others have given them, or they have taken for themselves, in elite institutions in creative ways. Harrison (1988) writes of the ways in which women developed strategies to ensure policies to aid women reached the federal agenda and strategies, as well, to ensure the appointment of women in the federal bureaucracy. Katzenstein (1998) tells of strategies women developed to change conservative institutions from within. Freeman (2000) describes the approaches of what she calls Party Women took to make a space for power inside American political parties. And Andersen (1996) points to the changes wrought in the practice of electoral politics from the political incorporation of women. These works provide the grounding for new questions gender scholars could ask: Are there implications of this work for individual-level analyses? Could, for example, skills gained in some places be more or less valuable than skills gained in other places? Are there comparative questions, looking, for example, at gender and race together, that would help one understand what is unusual

about women's integration into these spaces? Does intimacy provide access to the institutions in the first place, and are there benefits and drawbacks to that kind of access? Does essentialism make it easy to keep some forms of institutional segregation alive?

Scholars believe that the sometimes surprising places where feminists find themselves make for a diffuse and potentially resilient movement (Boles 1994; Costain 1992; Katzenstein 1998). This has been true even inside American political parties, where women were active and influential well before women had the right to vote (Andersen 1996; Cott 1990; Edwards 1997; Freeman 2000; Harrison 1988; Harvey 1998; Higginbotham 1990). Their insider strategies often changed the relationship of the parties to political issues (like the ERA; see Harrison 1988; Freeman 1987; Sanbonmatsu; Wolbrecht), and these strategies almost always increased the representation of women in federal bureaucracies. Do different strategies like these provide different kinds of education for ordinary citizens about the relevance of politics?

In a literature that has interestingly mostly run at the individual-level but that has obvious connections to macro-level analyses, scholars have found that gender consciousness has been an undependable resource for politics. While scholars have fine-tuned their measures of gender consciousness over time from Gurin's seminal work on gender consciousness (Gurin 1985) through Tolleson Rinehart's important effort to tease ideology out of the measure of gender consciousness (Tolleson Rinehart 1992) and Wong's efforts to compare measures of closeness to a range of different groups (Wong 1997), scholars have had trouble demonstrating the impact of consciousness.⁵ In recent years especially, they have had an easier time demonstrating that consciousness relates to policy preferences than to political action (Conover 1988; Conover and Sapiro 1993). While consciousness may channel political action (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001), it has been only unreliably connected to political participation since the early 1980s. Many scholars – using a range of measures differing in the details – find that the power of gender consciousness to generate action has waned over the last thirty years. In the 1970s, women's consciousness seemed to encourage political participation among women (Hansen, Franz, and Netmeyer-Mays 1976; Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern 1997: 88-91; Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk 1981; Klein 1984:136; Tolleson Rinehart 1992:134-139). Since then, no. And, when scholars have compared the power of Black consciousness with the power of gender consciousness to generate activism, they have gotten different results, sometimes finding that Black consciousness is especially important (Wilcox 1997, who found that gender consciousness did not make a difference) and sometimes not (Ardrey 1994). But Sigel (1996:127) offers hope that scholars will pay more attention to the priority that members of a disadvantaged group give to their group membership. She argues that when scholars move to incorporate priority into their traditional measures of group consciousness, they will see much more clearly the role of group consciousness in shaping a range of outcomes. In a related fashion, Young (1994) suggests we look for mechanisms that trigger consciousness, that American women may not wear their consciousness on their sleeves (see, as well, Tolleson Rinehart 1992; Sapiro with Conover 1997). Dawson (2004) develops promising

⁵ Of course, consciousness has a long history in the study of race and class (for a discussion, see, for example, Elster 1985; Schlozman and Verba 1979; Verba and Nie 1972).

new tools for examining Black feminist consciousness. Work in psychology has continued to refine measures of gender consciousness (Henderson-King and Stewart 1994) and offers guidance here as well. It would be helpful to understand more thoroughly whether gender consciousness takes a different form than race consciousness. What trouble does intimacy make for conceptions of linked fate?

The existing work on consciousness and the changing results over time – changes that seem more connected with the year the data were collected than with the method employed by the researcher – suggest a dynamic account of consciousness, one that links elite mobilization to mass participation and that draws more heavily on notions of political opportunity (Tarrow 1994; see Sapiro with Conover 1997), one that builds a tighter connection between individual and aggregate. We have important beginnings of this argument in Costain (1992), Conover and Gray (1983), Klein (1984), and Katzenstein and Mueller (1987). One could go even farther to develop a rich account of the incentives and actions of elites and their consequences for citizen behavior, perhaps along the lines of Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) or Kollman (1998). Harvey (1998) does some of this, but, though she alludes to citizen behavior, her work and her evidence are concentrated at the elite level. McConaughy (2005) builds an account of the Woman's Suffrage Movement with one version of this goal in mind. She worries that the literature on women's social movements has rested in the demand side of politics and has paid much less attention to the ways institutions do and don't supply outcomes activists demand. And so she embeds movement activism in states with parties and state legislatures and develops a powerful new way to understand when and why activists succeeded in some states and not others (see, as well, McCammon, Campbell, Granberg, and Mowery 2001). For an alternative way to think about the link between macro and micro, see Goss and Skocpol 2006 who chart the rise of what they call "self-regarding" women's groups in late twentieth century America, and O'Brien 2004 on race and class differences in policy priorities.

Another social movement literature has operated at both the aggregate and individual level. That is the literature demonstrating that gender identity is clearly at home in, comfortably articulated with, a whole range of social movements. Of course, Goffman could have told us that. Gender-identified women are at home in the Klan and can develop a perfectly sensible account of why women's values belong in the Klan (Blee 1991) (**and** they use surprising indigenous institutions like the Quaker Church to develop the base for Klan organizing). Because women sometimes buy into hierarchical accounts of gender, through the cooptation Jackman (1994) describes or the accommodation Sigel (1996) points to, this malleability – this fit of gender identity with many different kinds of movements -- is perhaps not surprising (Tolleson Rinehart's (1992) work to pull ideology from gender identity moves in exactly this direction). As a consequence of this malleability, elites have been able to exploit gender identity for their own ends, in the ways Harvey (1998) suggests, as a kind of campaign slogan parties learned how to use, or in the ways Bonk (1988) points to, in which women are seen by politicians as a kind of infinitely redescrivable, recombinable, redividable group.

Women's marginal political space has sometimes provided the impetus for expanding Americans' political repertoire (Tilly 1986). Flexner (1975) describes women's successful work to modernize lobbying strategies in order to win Woman Suffrage. Charles Payne (1995) tells of the ways in which women were shunned as a public spokespersons for the Civil Rights Movement, but, in the face of these barriers, used their skills to develop new, tremendously successful, grassroots strategies for the movement. Katzenstein (1998) takes up this topic as well – and arrives at an account of discursive strategies of women in the Catholic Church. Kollman (1998:108) discusses the ways groups like NOW have tried to shape public opinion, hoping that “Public legitimacy for policies [NOW proposes]...will follow the group's activities rather than precede them.” Freedman (1999) analyses the consequences of the campaigns pro-choice and pro-life groups wage, in Freedman's words, to “manipulate ambivalence,” that is, to build legitimacy for their side among those who don't yet know their own minds. And Dawson (2004) provides evidence of the emerging payoffs to the discursive strategies Black feminists are pursuing within the academy. Given these aggregate analyses, what should we expect to see in individual-level data about the strategies and tactics available to women?

The work on gender and social movements has explored the ways in which women have and haven't been able to rely on social movements to create political change, the special forms women's activism has taken, the special strategies women's activism has employed, and why. The picture that emerges from this literature – taken as a whole – is of the creative potential embedded in the just-marginal position of women with respect to the political system. This literature can do more, now, to ask what exactly is special about gender by drawing on explicit theoretical conceptions of gender in the aggregate, and to build tight linkages between the aggregate and the individual. Political context itself has clearly mattered in these accounts, though I'd argue we haven't fully exploited the explanatory power of political context and we haven't fully theorized such contexts with gender in mind, even in the aggregate work I talk about here. I'd also argue that the conversations between macro- and micro-level scholars are in their early stages, with a lot of promise ahead. Of course, this is hard work, and scholars in other fields have worried about exactly this problem (Stewart and McDermott 2004).⁶

Conclusion

For now, because I'm anxious to get your feedback, I'm going to use this brief concluding space to outline my wish-list for this paper, to give you the chance to tell me how that wish list should change.

⁶ The literature on framing has the potential to do some of this work. It's been a growth industry in the social movement field. And in a separate literature it's been a powerful idea in individual-level analyses, especially in the study of race. There are scholars (Gould) who are beginning to move the two levels of analysis closer to one another (with her ideas about emotional culture) (see, too, Ferree and Merrill 2000).

I want to say more about the successes of dynamic accounts of politics in making political science and their underexploited potential to help us bridge macro- and micro-accounts. Here I'm less interested in time series data and more interested in work drawing on the power of repeated cross-sections, cross-sections connected to different political worlds. It seems to me that a huge part of the success of political science has come from taking mechanisms from other fields and interacting them with a theorized context of politics. And it's handy for our understanding to get to look at the same relationship in a bunch of different (theorized) political contexts. I want us to do more of that, and I think that will get us to even better understandings than we currently have. It would allow us to play with observable implications in a richer way. And I think it gives us a chance to draw on both the macro and micro literatures.

I'd like to give a more explicit sense of the mechanisms available in other literatures that we already put to use in ours. I mean here more of a summary statement at the end, one that helps clarify what we have and haven't done.

I'd make more explicit the ways the aggregate/macro literature can help us specify political contexts. I do that in passing right now, but I'd like to add it up, and I want to draw from the dynamic accounts of Sanbonmatsu and Wolbrecht (and, perhaps, Goss and Skocpol and McDonagh's comparative work) to offer ideas about what a theorized context would do for an account of political action.

I'd like to rework and extend the discussion of the framing literature, making it its own section, as a representative of an intellectual space that works by looking, sometimes, at the aggregate and individual levels, an intellectual space that theorizes political context. Right now, this is a footnote.

I want to revisit the Brubaker and Cooper; Stewart and McDermott pieces.

Thanks, in advance, for your comments!

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