groups to compare their situations, leaving the constitution more open to challenge. What is left underanalyzed, however, is when and how these differing contradictions foster intragroup animosity, competition, and eventual cooperation. For example, Keating writes that although the struggle for the women's reservation bill was inspired by low-caste reservations, the most intense opposition came from low-caste and Muslim groups. Why do we not see the same convergence between groups that we witnessed during the nationalist movement? On the flip side, why did feminists and low-caste groups not collaborate to glean lessons from low-caste experiences in order to expose the limitations of quotas as a means to upliftment? Later, the author asserts that the women's reservation bill, eventually approved by the upper house of the Indian Parliament in 2010, "formally links women's empowerment to lower caste and minority group empowerment and challenges the fragmentation of struggles for gender justice and caste and minority rights" (p. 91); however, she does not provide the reader with the details of this process.

Perhaps most disappointing about the discussion of contemporary struggles of resistance is its focus on topics that have already been heavily discussed in contemporary literature (such as *sati,* the practice of widow burning, and the divorce case of Shah Bano). One axis of compensatory domination that is strikingly absent from the book is "class." As Keating quickly acknowledges, low-caste members received reservations in the public sphere, but their backwardness was linked to the Hindu caste system, rather than to social and economic disadvantages. In what ways has class domination been used as a compensatory tool in the colonial and postcolonial eras? Is class domination in India ever asserted in paternalist ways? What forms of resistance have emerged to fight class contradictions in India? Why have we not seen convergence between class-based movements and identity-based movements?

Toward the end of the book, Keating provides an interesting view into alternative solutions arising from Indian feminists' efforts to establish "egalitarian pluralism," a system that retains pluralism while rejecting compensatory domination and intragroup rule (of men over women). Part of the impetus for this effort arose when the Hindu Right appropriated the struggle for a universal civil code to assert communal dominance. Keating's focus on the "option" of an egalitarian civil code that can be used when and if people feel that their personal laws are discriminating against them is hypothetical and interesting, but it also raises major questions around the heavy reliance on "free choice" among vulnerable groups.

In sum, *Decolonizing Democracy* makes one think. It offers a refreshing framework for understanding power, and it raises many questions. For anyone interested in the complex nature of India's contemporary democracy and its swelling resistance movements, this is an important and fascinating book.

Gender, Politics and Institutions: Towards a Feminist Institutionalism. Edited by Mona Lena Krook and Fiona Mackay. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 256p. $95.00 cloth.
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— Denise Walsh, *Virginia University*

The prominent scholars in comparative politics of gender who contribute to this volume set out to "forge a synthesis between feminism and institutionalism" (p. xiii). They ask: What can new institutionalism (NI) bring to feminist political science (FPS); what can FPS bring to NI, and are feminist institutionalisms possible? The collection is not the opening salvo in this initiative but the continuation of an energetic research project led by the Feminist Institutionalist Network (FIN) (http://www.femfiin.com), founded in 2006. FIN has produced conference panels, an American Political Science Association short course, a symposium ("Critical Perspectives on Gender and Politics: Feminist Institutionalism," *Politics & Gender* 5 [June 2009]: 237–80), and assorted publications. In short, the contributors are not only interested in synthesizing feminist and institutional scholarship, they are institution builders. (Full disclosure: I attended one of the conference panels and the APSA short course.)

This volume is cohesive yet broad in thematic scope. Each of the eight empirical chapters tackles the three questions posed by the editors while also fitting into one of three themes: political recruitment and representation, state–family relations, and "political innovation" (decentralization, democratic transitions, and new institutions) (pp. 17–18). Answering the questions posed at the outset of the volume in her concluding chapter, Fiona Mackay writes, "NI offers new tools and frameworks that will enable feminists to better capture multiple dynamics of continuity and change"; further, FPS can help NI scholars to understand how institutions are gendered, the significance and work of informal practices, inequalities of power in institutions, and why institutional change has varied outcomes (p. 195). Finally, she insists that multiple types of feminist institutionalism are possible. Together, the forward, introduction, and concluding chapter provide useful overviews for feminist political science scholars who may not be steeped in new institutionalism, as well as important insights for NI scholars curious about the ways in which a gendered approach might contribute to their understanding of institutions, and would be useful in NI graduate courses.

Indeed, inclusion in the canon is a central aim of the contributors (Belfast panel discussion 2009; APSA Short Course 2010). Politics and gender scholars have routinely expressed frustration with being on the margins of the discipline (e.g., "A Comparative Politics of Gender Symposium," *Perspectives on Politics* 8 [March 2010]: 159–240). The message in this collection is that the best way to redress that marginalization is to dive into the central

debates of the discipline, thereby demonstrating that both feminist political science and new institutionalism have much to benefit from each other. A compelling example of this is Louise Chappell's analysis of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Chappell assesses the gender outcomes of the ICC (a FPS question) by asking whether the court should be "conceptualized as a 'new' institution," or whether it is constrained by "embedded norms and practices" that are sexist (an NI approach) (p. 164). Through this comingling of FPS and NI, Chappell is able to identify where the ICC is constrained by sexist legacies of the past and where it has behaved like the gender-friendly institution it appears to be. Similarly, Susan Franceschet situates her FPS question in an NI framework, asking how formal and informal rules shape women's substantive representation. Although FPS scholars have long been attuned to these two types of rules (as the editors note [p. 6]), Franceschet's deeply contextual approach to the Chilean and Argentine legislatures suggests that a more systematic comparison can generate more precise insights. Together, these two contributions help NI scholars understand why institutional change is often gradual.

Most of the contributors agree that feminist institutionalism can be situated within the four streams of new institutionalism, and therefore will be plural. As Mackay argues, feminist institutionalism will benefit from an eclectic approach that draws on "combined elements from at last two NI variants (most commonly historical institutionalism [HI] supplemented by sociological institutionalism [SI] or discursive institutionalism [DI]" (p. 182). Michelle Beyeler and Claire Annesley, however, challenge this integrationist logic. In contrast to the majority of the contributors, like Meryl Kenny, who insists that "NI can offer a number of useful tools to FPS [and] a gender approach can enrich NI theory" (p. 21), Beyeler and Annesley argue that "FI should be developed as a different NI variant, developing and presenting its own concepts . . . to capture as many issues and questions related to feminist concerns as possible" (p. 81). Questioning the strategy of embeddedness, Beyeler and Annesley recommend associated autonomy.

Understandably, given the relatively early stage of feminist institutionalism, this volume is more a "how to" guide than a collection of exemplary applications. The chapters contain suggestive illustrations drawn primarily from Europe and its former settler colonies, rather than systematically designed comparisons of causation (no chapter includes a discussion of alternative explanations, methods, or research designs). The result is not unfamiliar to readers of how-to guides: The information is clearly structured and helpful, but the chapters focus on the most conventional cases and tend to be descriptive. This descriptiveness is unsurprising, as critics have identified this as an NI weakness, along with the inability to grapple with change and agency (as Mona Lena Krook and Mackay note in their introduction; pp. viii–ix). The editors argue that as FPS is strong on the latter two issues it has much to offer NI, but that contribution is not always evident here.

For example, Jill Vickers offers a compellingly written analysis of federalism but writes agency out of the story. Even when contributors retain a focus on agency, the NI framework can lead to a restrictive approach. Georgina Waylen, who has published prize-winning work attentive to both agency and structure (*Engendering Transitions: Women's Mobilization, Institutions and Gender Outcomes,* 2007) queries in her chapter: "[A]re gender change agents more likely to be 'insurrectionaries' or 'subversives'? Will they have to try to achieve change through displacement or layering as opposed to drift or conversion?" (p. 152). This brings agency in through an NI framework that ignores context and invites an essentialization of "gender change agents." Equally telling in terms of the balance between FPS and NI, the collection neglects intersectionality entirely (e.g., Beyeler and Annesley fail to disaggregate women by class in their discussion of the welfare state; the volume neglects race, sexuality, ethnicity).

Certainly *Gender, Politics and Institutions* goes a substantial distance in laying out for feminist political science scholars what new institutionalism is, why it is important, and how they might think about applying it in their work. And it clearly presents to NI scholars the contributions that a feminist lens offers, particularly for understanding obstacles to institutional change. But as the contributors underscore, feminism is committed to change that few in the mainstream endorse (e.g., Lenita Friedenvall and Krook; p. 49). Hence, the incentive to integrate feminist insights into the NI canon is likely to remain thin. Further, as I argue elsewhere (Denise Walsh, "A Feminist Approach to Quotas and Comparative Politics," *Politics & Gender* 9 [September 2013]: 322–28]), feminist scholars may be better positioned to challenge the mainstream norms of the discipline if we draw upon the lessons of our own scholarship and lead with feminism instead of pursuing integration. Whether feminist institutionalism successfully challenges new institutionalism's predilection for stability and order or New Institutionalism strips away feminist commitments and replaces them with a "neutral" gender lens, this volume will be central to facilitating the emergence of feminist institutionalism.

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— David Waldner, *University of Virginia*

Weak states—in which corruption supplants the rule of law, state agencies have limited regulatory capacity, the state cannot fund itself through its own taxation efforts,