Gender in the Aggregate, Gender in the Individual,
Gender and Political Action
   Nancy Burns, University of Michigan and Center for Advanced
   Study in the Behavioral Sciences
Square Pegs and Round Holes: Challenges of Fitting Individual-Level
Analysis to a Theory of Politicized Context of Gender
   Jane Junn, Rutgers University

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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 gender means in individual lives. In this essay, I argue that we should encourage these two kinds of analysis to engage each other more intimately. This engagement would give political scientists the tools to say more about when, for whom, and for which outcomes gender matters. The conversation would give us better ways to understand how context makes gender relevant.

I believe that gender is a property of collections of people and social systems. We care about it because it is about systematic disadvantage and advantage. In this essay, I am especially interested in thinking about tools for identifying the political contexts in which this disadvantage and advantage come to matter in individual lives.

Iris Young says that gender is not much about a "self-consciously, mutually acknowledging collective with a self-conscious purpose," that instead, gender is a "less organized and unself-conscious collective unity"

(1994, 724). If she is right, then part of our task as social scientists interested in gender is to come to understand when social and political contexts can make gender relevant, sometimes in a way that people notice and call "gender," and sometimes not. Of course, doing that well requires a research design centered on comparison across contexts—different states, different years, different electoral campaigns.

I have two ideas about where to turn to develop tools to use to think about when political context makes gender matter. I have already mentioned the first: a conversation between macro-level and individual-level analyses of gender. The second is the literature on other properties of collections of people, and here I especially mean the literature on race and politics. I will focus in this essay—for reasons of space—almost exclusively on the first strategy.

What Could Come of a Serious, Continuous Conversation between Aggregate and Individual Analysis?

Aggregate analyses can help individual-level scholars with political context—with the political conditions under which gender matters in individual lives—because such aggregate analyses offer smoother data, data in which it is easier to see broad structural trends. If gender is a property of groups and systems, then aggregate and systemic analyses put it easily on display.[1] 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. They can offer ideas about ways to theorize context.

Individual-level analyses have things to offer aggregate scholars as well. Aggregate analysis 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 is next to impossible to see individual-level mechanisms in action, and so psychological and some sociological mechanisms can only be distantly inferred.

Individual-level analysis can provide access to psychological and sociological mechanisms. But analyses at this level can have trouble putting

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1. We might make gender up as we go, but that idiosyncratic sort of gender would not offer the same sort of systematic disadvantage that coordinated answers to what gender is offer, and so we would not care as much.

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.

We need both levels of analysis. We need the tools and results that would come from serious engagement of one with the other. Aggregate work can provide insights into aspects of political context that might make gender matter in individual lives; individual work can show whether and how these aspects of context shape individuals' thoughts and actions. Paired with systematic data from more than one year, more than one campaign, more than one location, this understanding could generate a raft of new ideas about gender.

The gender and politics literature is not the only literature to face the problem of locating a social construction in individual lives, of linking aggregate and individual analyses, and this takes me to my second idea about how to put gender on display in our work. The literature on race in black and white faces an identical problem (see, for example, the discussion in Brubaker and Cooper 2000 on race and identity). But there are ways in which the parts of the race and politics literature dealing with race in black and white have moved faster than the gender literature to allow linkages between aggregate and individual-level analyses. Scholars in this literature moved early to build connections between campaigns and discourse of political elites and ordinary citizens in their work on race and framing (Gamson and Modigliani 1987; Kinder and Sanders 1990, 1996). In addition, scholars have incorporated social repertoires of race into their analyses, especially their analyses of public opinion, building the link between the toolkit of ideas available from politics and ordinary action (Swidler 1986). I mean here: racism, black nationalism, and the like (Dawson 2001; Kinder and Sanders 1996). And they have begun to work through the consequences of segregation for the lenses through which some blacks see politics (see Dawson 1994).

Of course, gender scholars cannot borrow wholesale from the race literature because of the crucial differences between race in black and white and gender at the aggregate level. First, race has been a key feature, a key driving force, of the American political tradition. This does not 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.

Second, gender is organized largely through integration, whereas race in black and white is organized through separation (Goffman 1977; Jackman 1994). This means that gender works more subtly, often, and it means that studying gender policy and studying women's political action are pretty different activities because women are systematically on different sides of political battles about gender. By contrast, race in America can work blatantly, and African Americans are a more unified force in politics.

This integration, this intimacy, makes for invisibility in a number of ways. By working often through psychological intimidation, coercion, love, and acquiescence, gender hierarchies are recipes for the morselization of experience, for enabling people—both scholars and the individuals they study—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.[2] To be visible, these cumulated wrongs must be added up—either over institutions or over time. A single snapshot can miss these inequalities unless it is viewed through 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 what seem like small potatoes or setting the small inequalities within a structural account—disadvantage, even disadvantage that is perpetrated with violence, can seem like a choice.

Of course, this morselization does not just have implications for research designs. It also shapes the questions we ask in the first place. Can context—elites, parties, policies, events, and the like—enable people to overcome morselization? What are the conditions under which gender becomes obvious? When and how do contexts make gender salient? Are there conditions that enable people to use ideas about gender to shape their political thinking? To shape their political mobilization? When and what about politics encourages or discourages individuals from making gender operate to advantage groups? When and what about politics encourages a collectivity to become a self-conscious group?

Of course, context could affect the benefits of participation or the costs. It could shape benefits by priming identification with women, people's investments in or understanding of policy, their sense of obligation as a member of a group (Burns and Kinder 2002; Miller and Rahn 2002). It

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2. For a review of literature on such morselization, see Stewart and McDermott 2004, 532.

could shape costs by undercutting or adding to their efficacy, interest, or information or by providing an obvious framework for mobilization (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Zaller 1992). And, following William Riker and Peter Ordeshook's (1968) classic formulation, it could shape their assessment of the likelihood of getting benefits in the first place. It could work by differentially doing these things for women and men.

A conversation between macro and micro can help us ask these questions. Aggregate approaches can provide ideas about relevant dimensions of context and about contours of inequality. Individual-level approaches can offer ideas about the mechanisms through which context could come to matter in individuals' lives.

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 they viewed themselves as contributing to a literature on the topic, before they thought to cite one another on the subject of gender and political action.[3] By the 1940s, scholars were already conceptualizing gender in political and social context, despite the fact that they still were not self-conscious of creating a literature.

One team in particular, Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel 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 were somewhat less interested in the 1940 campaign than were men. For all respondents, lack of interest translated into identical patterns of nonvoting—among those with different levels of education, different economic resources, different ages, different religions, and the like. But, as the authors pointed out, "the result is startlingly different for the sex of the respondents" (1944, 48). They continued (pp. 48–49):

> 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

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3. For an early, critical review of the literature on women's voting, see Breckinridge 1933.

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.

Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and William McPhee (1954) took this idea, developed it to think about gender, and applied 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 interested in politics (pp. 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 (p. 28).

Other scholars also took up the question of gender and political action with individual-level data and aggregate-level lenses. Maurice Duverger (1955) framed his comparative examination of gender and political action with Simone de Beauvoir (in French, and that matters) in mind.[4] 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. Duverger said that "[t]he 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" (p. 130). He thought that real change would come after people succeeded in discursive work, in destroying the "deeply-rooted belief in the natural inferiority of women" (ibid.).

In 1960, using data from the Michigan Election Studies, Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes continued the focus on the social expectations for political interest and action for men and women to work through a dynamic account of gender and political action. 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" (p. 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 wondered about the future and argued that there were countervailing possibilities. Higher

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4. On the serious problems with the English version of *The Second Sex*, see Sarah Glazer, "Lost in Translation," *New York Times Book Review*, 22 August 2004; and Moi 2002.

education would erode gender differences, they thought, but small children might continue to keep women from political action (pp. 488–89). They worried 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.

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, both within a single year and across years, and use context to build specific observable implications; in the way they resist assuming that 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. Their research designs, centered as they were on collecting data from more than one election cycle, laid the framework for dynamic thinking. For these scholars, context involved the ways campaigns mobilized individuals, and it involved the climate of gendered expectations about political interest and aptitude in which ordinary individuals live.

A Self-Conscious Literature

More recently, scholarly analyses of gender and political activity have continued to report small but persistent sex differences in overall levels of political activity. This small gender gap in participation is, it seems, narrower in the United States than in other countries (Christy 1987; Verba et al. 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—explanations centered largely outside of political contexts. One explanation is squarely sociological. The other three move between sociology and psychology in their focus on why women might have lower levels of political interest than men. 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 homemak-

ing socialize women out of politics and lead them to lower levels of political interest (Andersen 1975; Jennings and Niemi 1981; Sapiro 1983; Welch 1977). Third, scholars have asked whether childhood socialization depresses women's political interest (Welch 1977). Finally, scholars have examined the role of perspectives on gender roles as a cause of political activity—the idea is that women's political interest might be depressed by ideologies of motherhood, that politics is simply not a proper arena for women; this explanation is often linked to adult or childhood socialization (Clark and Clark 1986; Sapiro 1983; Tolleson-Rinehart 1992). In the first explanation, gender is outside of individuals, in social structures that govern the distribution of resources. In the next two, gender is in social expectations and women's responses to them. And, in the last one, gender is in women's own ideologies.

Scholars have been keen to understand the nonpolitical roots of women's political disadvantage. Early scholars (that is, scholars in the 1970s and 1980s) yearned for data on the details of institutional experiences, especially details about the workplace, in order to move toward a differentiated view of the social 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 in order 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 does not seem to matter directly. For women, what does seem to matter is participating in the process of decision making 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 that large-scale division of labor at home keeps some with small children out of the workforce. For men, the indirect effects come from advantages to men, advantages that come from the ways that children encourage men's workforce *and* religious participation. The story has come to center on the way that gender links institutions and on the centrality of gender to institutions outside of politics.

Women have, of course, been involved in nonpolitical 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. 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 nonpolitical civic spaces have often provided the skills and mobilization to bring women and men to politics (Harris 1994, 1999; Tate 1991, 1994; Walton 1985).

Work on the political roots of inequality has been less common. But there are striking exceptions to this claim. Kristi Andersen's earliest work on political action does exactly this kind of work. In her exemplary analysis, Andersen uses systematic data collected in the Michigan Election Studies' repeated cross sections to understand the ways in which gender was unusually mobilized in the 1972 presidential race and by the women's movement. Her analyses of repeated cross sections gave her the foundation for a dynamic account of the power of gender to serve as a mobilizing tool. She said then:

> [I]t is hard to imagine this unity persisting. . . . Women are probably too cross-pressured ever to constitute a lasting political movement. In fact, unless the women's movement is accepted as a structural critique of American society—unlikely, to say the least—the achievements of the movement's own social goals will produce increasing political fragmentation among women. (1975, 452)

Later work by Karen Beckwith (1986) on gender differences in participation over time, Virginia Sapiro with Pamela Johnston Conover (1997)

on the 1992 Year of the Woman, and Sue Tolleson-Rinehart and Jeanie Stanley (1994) on the Ann Richards race in Texas builds on this understanding of gender in political context.

Scholars studying gender differences in psychological engagement in politics have turned to political context as well, and have begun to put the power of repeated cross sections and state comparisons to work. Evidence of gender differences in psychological involvement with politics is abundant (Andersen 1975; Baxter and Lansing 1983; Beckwith 1986; Bennett and Bennett 1989; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1993, 1996; Rapoport 1982, 1985; Sapiro 1983; Soule and McGrath 1977; Tolleson-Rinehart 1992). The most successful recent efforts to understand women's lower levels of political engagement have turned to look at political context, especially at the paucity of elite women in politics. Through both longitudinal and cross-sectional analyses, these efforts have suggested that the presence of women in visible political positions engages women citizens (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Hansen 1997; Sapiro and Conover 1997; Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997). Monika McDermott (1997) makes a compelling case for the role that candidate gender plays in low-information elections, demonstrating the power that candidate gender has in shaping vote choice when citizens know little about a candidate. Leonie Huddy and Nayda 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). Karen 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 Kim Fridkin Kahn suggests that the media has historically covered women candidates less well than men candidates (1994a) and that this difference in coverage may make women candidates seem less viable (1992, 1994b).[5] Suzanne Mettler (2005) investigates the ways the GI Bill fostered men's engagement with politics, but had little effect on women's political engagement.

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5. 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 (but not men) from guessing (Mondak and Davis 2001).

This line of work offers increasingly tight linkages to the psychological literatures that can help sort through the mechanisms that might enable context—the presence of women candidates, especially—to engage women (and possibly disengage men) with the political system.[6] The 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. For now, context is largely the presence or absence of women elites and their ability to spark or discourage political interest. But more could be done, much more. Taking a cue from the literature on racism, scholars could look at the incentives elites—movement and establishment elites—face to use ideas about gender politically. Scholars could build on Steven Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen (1993) and Corrine McConnaughy (2005) to think about the strategic mobilization of women. What, to borrow Donald Kinder and Lynn Sanders' (1996) language, are the "electoral temptations" of gender? Are there "electoral temptations"? This puzzle is a perfect opportunity to draw insights from the macro literature for individual-level analyses.

The literature on gender consciousness offers another obvious place for building a connection between aggregate and individual. While scholars have fine-tuned their measures of gender consciousness over time from Patricia 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 Cara Wong's efforts to compare measures of closeness to a range of different groups (Wong 1998), scholars have had trouble demonstrating the impact of consciousness.[7] In recent years especially, they have had an easier time demonstrating that consciousness relates to policy preferences, rather than to political action (Conover 1988; Conover and Sapiro 1993). Although consciousness may channel political action (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001), it has been 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 30 years. In the 1970s, women's consciousness seemed to encourage political par-

6. In addition, because the gap in engagement appears to open well before women and men are settled into adulthood, scholars will 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.

7. 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).

ticipation among women (Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern 1997, 88–91; Hansen, Franz, and Netemeyer-Mays 1976; Klein 1984, 136; Miller et al. 1981; Tolleson-Rinehart 1992, 134–39). 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). Roberta 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.

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 (Andersen 1975; Tarrow 1994; see Sapiro with Conover 1997). We have important beginnings of this argument in Anne Costain (1992), Pamela Johnston Conover and Virginia Gray (1983), Ethel Klein (1984), and Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller (1987). One could go even further 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 Ken Kollman (1998). Anna Harvey (1998) does some of this, but, though she alludes to citizen behavior, her work and her evidence are concentrated at the elite level. McConnaughy (2005) builds an account of the woman 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 do not 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 et al. 2001).

The most successful work combining context and gender has done two things simultaneously. It has employed theories and measures placing gender in context, and it has deployed theories and measures of individual-level mechanisms, usually from psychology. In the end, this

work has helped us understand not just that context enables gender to matter, but it has allowed us to begin to specify why and exactly how.

What Could Individual-Level Analyses Learn from the Aggregate Literature about Political Context?

I am going to provide examples of the kinds of tools that could be powerfully integrated into the individual-level literature from just one aggregate literature, that on social movements. Other aggregate literatures would prove equally valuable conversation partners. In fact, there are the beginnings of an important conversation between the literature on policy development and that on political action (Campbell 2003; Mettler and Soss 2004; Soss 1999, 2000; Mettler 2005 offers the clearest example using gender). With the social movement literature in mind, what kinds of conversations could emerge?

How do preexisting organizations shape political action? Social movement scholars have shown that women's movements, like most social movements, depend heavily on indigenous—preexisting, sex-segregated—organizations and networks. We have seen this over and over again: in Jo Freeman's (1975) pathbreaking 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–equal rights amendment forces compared with pro-equal rights amendment (ERA) activists; and in Donald Mathews and Jane Sherron De Hart'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 have not 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.[8] I take this part of the field to be a demonstration 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.

What are the consequences for ordinary people of activists' bureaucratic and electoral strategies?   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 Freeman 1987; Harrison 1988; Sanbonmatsu 2004; Wolbrecht 2000), and these strategies almost always increased the representation of women in federal bureaucracies. What are the consequences of these strategies for ordinary citizens? Do these strategies offer different kinds of education for ordinary citizens about the relevance of politics?

Are there "electoral temptations" of gender, as there are for race [Kinder and Sanders (1996)]?   Elites have been able to exploit gender identity for their own ends, in the ways Harvey (1998) suggests, as a kind of campaign slogan that parties learned how to use, or in the ways Kathy Bonk (1988) points to, in which women are seen by politicians as a kind of infinitely redescribable, recombinable, redividable group. Scholars have examined the ways gender issues have been incorporated into the party system (Sanbonmatsu 2004; Wolbrecht 2000). I could imagine using this literature to build an explicitly political model of citizen mobilization and demobilization around gender.

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8. As Goffman (1977, 308) put it, women are "cut off ecologically from congress with their kind."

Do social movements offer up new discursive tools for ordinary peo-ple? Katzenstein (1998) arrives at an account of discursive strategies of women in the Catholic Church. Kollman (1998, 108) discusses the ways in which groups like the National Organization for Women have tried to shape public opinion, hoping that "[p]ublic legitimacy for policies [NOW proposes] . . . will follow the group's activities rather than precede them." Michael Dawson (2001) provides evidence of the emerging payoffs to the discursive strategies black feminists are pursuing within the acad-emy. And, in a beautiful example combining aggregate and individual, Paul Freedman (1999) analyzes the consequences of the campaigns pro-choice and pro-life groups wage, in his words, to "manipulate ambiva-lence," that is, to build legitimacy for their side among those who do not yet know their own minds. He demonstrates the mobilizing power of the languages that interest groups dream up and promulgate. Given these aggregate analyses, are there individual-level consequences of ideas move-ments offer? Does it matter that we have more ways in which gender inequality is "storied," now, than it was in the past?[9] Do people have new tools to use to think and unthink gender hierarchy? How does fram-ing work at the individual level?

Conclusion

I am excited about the good that can come from the discussion I just outlined. The conversation will give us tools to build an even richer un-derstanding of gender and political action, one with dynamic moving parts. I am excited especially about work that draws on the power of repeated cross sections, cross sections connected to—representing—different political worlds. Now-classic works took advantage of ideas about political context wed to the power of repeated cross-sections to set high standards for the field (Andersen 1975).

As Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper (2000, 27) point out: "A strongly institutionalized ethnonational classificatory system makes cer-tain categories readily and legitimately available for the representation of social reality, the framing of political claims, and the organization of political action." But, as they also make clear, just because a system is available does not mean it is used. And part of our job is to understand

9. On "storied" identities, see Somers 1994.

when and among whom this system becomes salient. The authors argue (pp. 4–5):

> These are categories of everyday social experience, developed and deployed by ordinary social actors . . . used by "lay" actors in some (not all!) everyday settings to make sense of themselves, of their activities, of what they share with, and how they differ from, others. [They are] also used by political entrepreneurs to persuade people to understand themselves, their interests, and their predicaments in a certain way, to persuade certain people that they are (for certain purposes) "identical" with one another and at the same time different from others, and to organize and justify collective action along certain lines.

Understanding when and how this happens—understanding how politics enables gender to shape individuals' political actions and public opinions—is, I think, one of our next big jobs as political scientists interested in gender.

It is time to learn the ways politics and history make some explanations work at some times and not others, noticing how gender is called up over time and space, developing an account of individual action that draws explicit mechanisms from politics itself. It is time to rework sociological and psychological mechanisms with politics in mind.

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Square Pegs and Round Holes: Challenges of Fitting Individual-Level Analysis to a Theory of Politicized Context of Gender

Jane Junn, Rutgers University

In "Gender in the Aggregate, Gender in the Individual, Gender and Political Action," Nancy Burns makes the compelling argument to integrate individual- and aggregate-level perspectives in the study of gendered political action. She issues a call for action for the two to assess similarities and differences in approaches, identify unique contributions and weaknesses, and move forward to better understand gender and political action. Beyond this general goal is an ambitious effort to build a theory of politicized context around gender in order to stake out a position for political science to contribute to our understanding of women in action. In this regard, her ambitions are to identify mechanisms that work to strengthen normative goals of enhancing equality and dignity in women's lives, and in politics more generally.

Burns argues for a dynamic account of gender and political action, suggesting a course of study that can capture the interaction of individual-level mechanisms with theorized political contexts. She surveys the literature, summarizing the small but persistent differences found in political activity between men and women, and concludes that the empirical results are unsatisfying in the absence of theoretical progress. In so doing, she sends a strong message to large-n behavioralists to learn from scholars who examine the dynamic interaction of politics and gender.