

maximize the votes on abortion measures, rather than proposing the most radical measure that can muster a majority, because it is easier to explain votes to constituents if many other members voted the same way. The preference for a measure that garners a large majority probably varies across members, but it is a reasonable assumption.

The empirical results are interesting, but because the real world limits our possible data, they are sometimes difficult to interpret. For example, on pages 173–74, the authors find that pro-life media attention affects the fate of measures referred to Judiciary but not to other committees, and that Republicans are far more successful than Democrats in the Appropriations Committee, where the sponsor's ideological extremism is positively associated with the success of his or her proposal. The authors provide all of the necessary caveats.

The book explores differing legislative behavior across religious groups but does not consider possible gender differences. This is surprising, since a number of studies have shown that women in the House vote differently on abortion bills than do men. For readers of this journal, the omission will certainly be disappointing.

Overall, however, *Abortion Politics in Congress* is an exemplar for work that seeks to explain the way that institutions, the distribution of opinion inside and outside of the chamber, and the substance of an issue interact to influence policy. The explosion of issues into which abortion has been insinuated is a logical response to political constraints and opportunities. The authors show that although abortion sparks extraordinary passion, it produces somewhat more ordinary political behavior in the House.

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The Politics of State Feminism: Innovation in Comparative Research. By Dorothy E. McBride and Amy G. Mazur. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 2010. 305 pp. \$69.50 cloth, \$69.50 eBook.

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This is the much-anticipated capstone book of the Research Network on Gender Politics and the State (RNGS) project. Taking the RNGS data as

their starting point, McBride and Mazur embark on an ambitious exploration of state feminism, social movements, institutions, representation, and policy in 13 advanced industrial democracies. This volume departs from the country-by-country analysis that characterized the earlier RNGS works. Instead, McBride and Mazur organize this study by policy debate, taking longitudinal, sectoral, and regional data from five issue areas: abortion, job training, political representation, prostitution, and “hot issues.” While the five RNGS issue books hinted at the power of the RNGS project, this final volume clearly reveals the project’s sheer depth, breadth, and implications. Indeed, this overall picture was not always clear to RNGS researchers themselves; the authors note that it was not until this final volume that it became clear that “state feminism was specifically about the movement-agency nexus.” Using a mixed-methods approach and the data collected in the previous RNGS projects, the authors set out to craft “an empirically based theory of state feminism” (p. x).

The volume has four sections. In Part I: Foundations and Framework, the project’s mixed-methods approach, the propositions to be tested, and the framework used throughout the study are clearly and meticulously explained. The authors provide a rich theoretical foundation for the state feminism framework, bringing together theories of institutionalism, movements, representation, and policy conflict and framing. They use these theories to develop the 11 propositions around which the study is centered. An outstanding feature of Part I is the detailed operationalization of concepts; for example, the authors provide clear lines of demarcation between women’s policy agencies (WPAs) and women’s movements. In addition, they clearly differentiate feminist movements from women’s movements, a useful distinction that should become a new standard in the literature. Specifically, they argue that “[a]ll feminist movements are women’s movements, but not all women’s movement actors express feminist aspirations. A feminist movement is a type of women’s movement with a specific feminist discourse” (p. 33). Further contributions from this section include tracing the strength and activism of women’s movements over time and analyzing the seven types of WPAs identified by RNGS researchers.

In Part II: Exploring State Feminism, each chapter explores and tests the different theoretical hypotheses about state feminism. The considerable scope of these analyses provides a wealth of insights into the complex interactions among women’s movements and the state, and many of the results presented provide important challenges to the conventional

wisdom regarding women and politics. For example, the authors present evidence suggesting that although women's movement alliances with leftist *legislators* are important, left *government* is not a necessary condition for women's movement success. Furthermore, the authors overturn the mainstream literature's – and their own – hypotheses about which factors predict movement and WPA success. They find that there is no common combination of left support, movement resources, and favorable opportunity structure that consistently explains the relationship among movements, agencies, and outcomes. Thus, rather than making generalizations about these relationships, they conclude that we must “look for the nuanced and contextual effects of combinations” of all of these factors (p. 261).

Part III: Unpacking State Feminism, with chapters by other RNGS researchers, goes “beyond state feminism,” exploring the applicability and implications of the RNGS framework for the four strands of theory on which state feminism is based: social movements, representation, issue framing, and new institutionalism. First, in her investigation of women's movements, Outshoorn finds that women's movements do not follow the typical cycle of protest described in the social movement literature; unlike other protest movements that began in the 1960s and waned in the 1980s, women's movements have continued to see comparatively high levels of participation. She further finds that women's movements have become increasingly institutionalized and that their participation in conventional institutions is more fruitful than high levels of activism.

Lovenduski and Guadagnini's study of state feminism and political representation uses the RNGS data to address a wealth of questions about representation, including a reevaluation of the relationships between descriptive and substantive representation. In doing so, they present compelling evidence that critical acts, rather than critical mass, provide the linkage between descriptive and substantive representation. This should not be interpreted as evidence that descriptive representation is unnecessary; these authors conclude that in order for these individual actions to be effective in enhancing the success of women's movements, women must be present in the legislature. In terms of issue framing, Sauer examines the role of gendered framing in the policy process. She finds that if an issue is to be mainstreamed, women's movements and WPAs must actively work to gender the frame over the entirety of the policy debate. She finds that such actions have led to cultural change on gendered issues, and that framing itself has evolved from a narrow focus on gender to encompass multiple and overlapping

inequalities. Finally, in their exploration of gender and new institutionalism, Mazur and McBride examine the major theories of institutional development, concluding that adding gender into the analysis produces mixed results. For example, path dependence and constant cause do help explain the development of WPAs; however, these theories fail to explain change in institutions when the analyses are grouped by country or region. This indicates that “institutionalists need to expose their theories to the world of gendered institutions” (p. 260).

In Part IV: Conclusion, McBride and Mazur explicate a theory of state feminism not found in the previous RNGS volumes. As the authors themselves note, the propositions set forth in *The Politics of State Feminism* move state feminism from a framework to a theory. As a theory, state feminism is complex and robust: Women’s policy agencies form alliances with women’s movements to achieve women’s movement goals. When agencies are activist and where they adopt the same gendered frames as women’s movements, movement success is more likely to occur. Thus, the key to state feminism is not simply women’s movement success; state feminism is realized when the partnership between women’s movements and women’s policy agencies results in the achievement of movement goals. McBride and Mazur then develop this theory further, differentiating between *transformative* state feminism, wherein the partnership achieves feminist movement goals, and *movement* state feminism, wherein the partnership achieves nonfeminist women’s movement goals.

This densely packed volume must be read in order to appreciate fully both the nuanced arguments made by the authors and the multitude of insights revealed by their mixed-method analyses. I should note that those who are unfamiliar with the previous RNGS research are likely to find the book’s level of detail and intricacy overwhelming; scholars familiar with state feminism, on the other hand, will find this volume indispensable. It is hard to disagree with McBride and Mazur’s conclusion: “This study of the politics of state feminism not only improves the understanding of gender, politics, and the state; it proposes a way to improve general science through a better integration of both feminist and non-feminist analysis and qualitative and quantitative approaches in those fields that have not benefited from knowledge gained through gender research” (p. 264).

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