

them. We realize the radicalism of this proposal and challenge you to adopt that radicalism because it is not a “short cut,” and it is the only way to avoid “long delays” in ending the masculinist structures of the discipline and making it truly inclusive for women and everyone.

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How an Intersectional Approach Can Help to Transform the University

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Advocates have been striving for decades to improve the representation of women and people of color in the academy. The results in political

science have been fairly limited. From 1980 to 2010, the proportion of women among white political science faculty grew from 9.6% to 24.8% (APSA 2011, 44). Even with this sizable increase, women constituted fewer than a quarter of white political scientists. Within their respective ethnoracial groups, women of color made up a greater proportion of political science faculty but remain woefully underrepresented in the profession, with only 79 Latino, 161 African American, and 117 Asian American female political science faculty nationally in 2010 (APSA 2011, 44–46). Overall, the proportion of scholars of color within political science during this period, male and female, has remained largely flat; in 2010, 88.9% of political science faculty were white. In this essay, I argue that an intersectional approach to thinking about this issue — one that acknowledges the marginalization and privilege that cut across faculty within departments and universities — raises the possibility of changing the conversation about inclusion, potentially opening up new possibilities for making substantive change within political science departments and universities.

An example from my own experience points to how an intersectional approach is disruptive to established practices. In 2004, I was invited by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars to present a paper. The new series offered junior scholars the opportunity to invite two nationally renowned scholars to provide feedback on a work in progress. Given this unique opportunity, I was excited to present a new project I had been contemplating for some time — a paper exploring how to apply intersectionality to empirical work (García Bedolla 2007). As a woman of color, this project was deeply personal; it was an attempt to think about how to do social science in a way that centered on my own intersectional life experiences. Unfortunately, my discussants were not enthusiastic about the project. Their responses were so negative, in fact, that audience members felt compelled to intervene on my behalf.

I share the profoundly negative response my intersectional work generated because it made clear to me that a theoretical framing that, to me, was intuitively logical, has profound implications for how we conceptualize and carry out our academic work. At minimum, as Cristina Beltrán (2010) points out so eloquently in *The Trouble with Unity*, it asks us to question apparently fixed categories like race in order to develop a more fluid understanding of how categorization(s) affect individual life chances. This approach is analytically distinct from common ways that social scientists have defined and used categories in quantitative and qualitative scholarship over the past few decades. What I

was asking in my presentation was for these senior scholars to rethink their own assumptions, framings, and categories. That is a hard sell under any circumstances and impossible to achieve with one presentation or paper. Had I realized this at the time, I probably would have framed the work quite differently, and I would not have been so surprised by the strongly negative response.

If we are considering the ways that intersectionality might be used to help transform political science and the academy, we need to be cognizant of its radically disruptive tendencies and the strong reactions those disruptions can elicit. These disruptive tendencies are what create new possibilities for alliances, framings, and policies to address multiple inequalities within institutions. But any disruptive force will lead to pushback from those for whom these changes are uncomfortable or are perceived as threatening to the advances they have struggled for decades to achieve. The problem is that the diversity infrastructure within most universities is built around the same fixed categories that have been used in social science research: there are centers, resources, and/or policies focused on particular racial groups (such as African Americans and Chicanos/Latinos), gender (with “women’s” centers), and sexuality (often framed as LGBTQ). On most university campuses, even though the students and faculty who access these spaces often overlap, from a resource and staffing standpoint there is little recognition that these categories are not mutually exclusive. Rethinking these categories will require a great deal of discussion and reframing of strongly held beliefs about what are “appropriate” (and therefore valid) categories of difference.

That said, I also believe that an intersectional framing leaves open possibilities for real transformative change within political science departments and institutions of higher education. These changes fall along three main lines: (1) alliance building; (2) issue framing, particularly in terms of considering issues of marginalization and privilege simultaneously; and (3) analyzing results. I make these distinctions for analytical purposes, understanding that none of these is mutually exclusive and that they intersect with one another in important ways.

Alliance Building

This symposium considers how scholars can use their research and experiences to help diversify the academy. I believe that for this to happen, we must start by seeking out “folks of good will” — people who are located across categories of difference yet who might, nevertheless, be

supportive of egalitarian policies if the policies fell within a particular set of parameters. From an organizing standpoint, Saul Alinsky ([1971] 1989) argued it is critical to meet folks “where they’re at.” In other words, it is vital to frame positions and policies in ways that resonate with individuals and then build on those initial successes so as to create greater and deeper movement and change over time. This strategy, is, I believe, not only good organizing but is also a realistic necessity within political science departments. Most departments do not contain a critical mass of women or faculty of color large enough to move policy. Those interested in change must, therefore, depend on the support of these folks of good will. Developing the tools necessary to cultivate those new allies is critical.

The first step is finding common ground. In my experience, curriculum is often a place where these types of alliances can develop (and where the stakes are seen as lower than in hiring, for instance). Many political scientists support the idea of ideological pluralism, and — particularly after the November 2012 election — it is clear to many that the electorate is changing. Building on that, it becomes possible to make the argument that a department’s course offerings need to reflect these demographic changes and what they mean for the future of American politics. The next step is to say that graduate training also must include some deeper understanding of diverse populations both nationally and internationally.

Defining “diversity” in these conversations from an intersectional perspective can help to build alliances with folks of good will by allowing a variety of faculty members to “see themselves” in these courses. As an example, “race” work has often been defined as not gender-focused. If a racial inequality course also focuses on gender issues, including expressions of masculinity within and among groups, more faculty might see those issues as relevant to their own interests and experiences. Similarly, if “gender” courses include components on race, class, and sexuality, then more department members might see that content as a valid part of the curriculum. Intersectionality can foster feelings of inclusivity, but with the caveats discussed above — a shared sense of inclusivity will not automatically appear, but rather will need to be constructed through ongoing dialogue among department members. Ideally, over time, these discussions can lead to a broad alliance with a shared vision of a more expansive view of “politics.” One could imagine such a vision eventually leading to new hires whose job descriptions are framed in support of that vision.

Issue Framing

To me, one of the most potentially transformative aspects of an intersectional frame is its ability to move beyond zero-sum visions (or what some people call the Oppression Olympics) in order to consider how marginalization and privilege express themselves within institutions (Hancock 2011; Strolovitch 2007). Most important is the appreciation of how both can exist simultaneously within individuals. This allows scholars to see how feelings of stigma can exist among and across multiple dimensions and how they may vary, for different reasons, both within and among individuals (Beltrán 2010). For example, a black man is marginalized in terms of his racial identity, but dominant in terms of his gender. Similarly, a white woman can experience gender marginalization but also is the beneficiary of white privilege. It is likely that these crosscutting experiences of marginalization complicate these individuals' feelings of power and subordination within particular social contexts (García Bedolla 2005). By focusing on how these experiences are crosscutting, an intersectional approach possesses the potential for the development of feelings of commonality across individuals who, on the face of it, would not imagine that they share much in common (Weldon 2008).

By focusing on commonality, I am not suggesting that all experiences of marginalization and/or privilege are comparable. Too much focus on individuals' shared oppression can have the effect of negating the validity and significance of individuals' direct confrontation with racialized, sexist, or heteronormative expectations within the academy. Iris Young's work is useful here. Young argues justice should refer not only to distribution but also to "the institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation" (1990, 39). In Chapter 2 of her book, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990), Young attempts to define what she calls the five faces of oppression: (1) exploitation, (2) marginalization, (3) powerlessness, (4) cultural imperialism, and (5) violence. She develops this framework in order to consider the overlapping oppressions that exist across groups while also allowing for variation in levels of oppression within groups. Young's framework is a very useful starting point for understanding the intersection of marginalization and privilege among university faculty. Only by naming oppression in all its complexity can we begin to comprehend and develop the institutional conditions necessary for unraveling it.

One important aspect of Young's framing is that it attempts to lay out, in a very specific way, the fact that not all forms of oppression are equivalent to one another and also that not all experiences of suffering should be considered "oppression." A privileged individual can, in fact, have experienced significant suffering over the course of her life. She could have been subject to abusive parenting, neglect, or other forms of harm. Yet, that suffering is not oppression if it is a product of individual-level chance rather than structural inequality. The two are not mutually exclusive, but from the standpoint of institutional change it is an important distinction to keep in mind.¹ It would be impossible for any institution to try to eradicate suffering. What institutions can do is address systemic bias that leads to discrimination. Young's framing helps to unpack these two factors in order to help focus our efforts on those structural aspects of the oppression that exist within our society and, by extension, our universities.

This more complex consideration of how oppression can exist within and across individuals could, I believe, result in a potentially more transformative framing of the issues facing faculty at different points in their careers. In particular, it could result in a reevaluation of policies that look neutral on their face but that in practice have differential effects on faculty from different backgrounds. By breaking out of the "oppressed/not oppressed" binary, an intersectional approach to addressing issues of marginalization and privilege could lead to a change in how department members understand what is at stake with certain issues and, perhaps, a reframing of the potential winners and losers that may result if university policies and practices were to become more consciously antioppressive.

Considering the winners and losers of policies leads naturally to the third line of analyzing results.

Analyzing Results

Young also cautioned us to remember that equality of treatment, if built upon an unequal foundation, will by definition lead to inequality of result. In today's world of "colorblind talk," it is difficult to arrive at justifications for unequal treatment in order to address structural inequalities. I do not believe that trend will reverse anytime soon. Yet if a department has been involved in discussions that see oppression as

1. My thanks to my colleague Zeus Leonardo for reminding me of this important distinction.

intersectional, multiple, and crosscutting, one could imagine that this reframing could also affect how that department measures the impacts of its policies and practices. Considerations such as differential impact and/or the overall departmental climate could at least begin to be part of the conversation.

For example, most graduate programs do not analyze retention rates by gender, class, and/or ethnoracial group. Yet, such an analysis could help to identify important information about the impact of “equal treatment” on particular types of students. If it so happens that female graduate students of color tend to leave programs late in the process and white women tend to leave earlier, departments can then consider what factors at those different points in the process are most relevant to these students’ decisions to leave and derive solutions that can address the students’ particular needs. The critical point, which Young highlights, is that experiences of oppression are complex and may affect different populations differently, but they are still a product of structural inequality. This way, if departments find differences across female students, an intersectional approach helps us to understand that those differences should still be seen as a product of gender bias, but that the impact of that bias can vary across women from different racial backgrounds. Thus, the lack of a universal “women’s” experience in a department does not mean that the difficulties faced by particular women should be defined as a product of individual-level suffering rather than structural gender bias.

At its most basic, an intersectional frame asks us to question established categories, to take seriously our own multiple positionalities, and to unpack what we think is “normal,” “natural,” and/or “given.” The adoption of that sort of critical intersectional analysis of department policies and practices raises the possibility of a reimagining of a department’s values, expectations, and exclusionary procedures. Such a process should result in a new set of metrics for determining a policy’s success or failure.

Conclusion

In its October 2011 report, the APSA Task Force on Political Science in the 21st Century expressed its concern about the discipline’s ability to live up to its

full potential as a scholarly discipline to enrich the discourse, broaden the understanding, and model the behavior necessary to build strong nation-

states in a rapidly changing world where population shifts and related issues regarding race, ethnicity, immigration, and equal opportunity structure some of the most significant conflicts affecting politics and policymaking. (APSA Task Force 2011, 1)

The Task Force also pointed out that political science as a discipline lags far behind most of the social sciences in terms of its representation of women and minorities among its faculty. The most striking finding in the report is that, whereas the levels of representation of women have risen modestly, the levels across ethnoracial group members have remained essentially flat over the past three decades. The demography of our society has changed dramatically; that of our discipline has not.

How can we explain this? Members of the Task Force had many long and heated conversations on the subject. We made no claims to have arrived at an exhaustive answer. As chair of the Research Working Group, I attempted to explain how the discipline's common approaches to research questions — ontologically, epistemologically, and methodologically — restricted the types of concerns that could form part of the research process. Those limitations on what is possible (and therefore what is valued) have an important impact on how women and scholars of color experience their professional lives within political science departments. As an example, if your life experiences tell you that ethnoracial categories are intimately intertwined with an individual's gender and/or class outlook, it is difficult to adopt statistical models that are predicated on the epistemological assumption that racialized experiences are independent from experiences of gender and/or class, as is true when these social factors are operationalized as independent (often dummy) variables within a regression analysis.

Yet, political scientists have been raising these concerns for years. For more than three decades, APSA has had status committees and organized research sections dedicated to advancing a more egalitarian agenda. A great deal of positive change has resulted from the work of these committees and the establishment of these more inclusive intellectual spaces. But the task force's findings demonstrate that there is a great deal more that needs to be done. An intersectional approach to these questions could at least change the conversation, disrupt the already established battle lines, and lead individuals who now see themselves on opposite sides of the issue to possibly recognize some commonalities where before they saw none. At the very least, our

discipline cannot afford not to act. We need to disrupt and change the conversation if we hope to move our discipline and our profession forward.

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Developing Experience, Networks, and Capacities: Leadership as Practiced in Feminist Human Rights Activism *Brooke A. Ackerly, Vanderbilt University*

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This essay draws on insights from research into human rights activism to propose a feminist human rights account of leadership that could be applied to political science. I advance the view that the practice of leadership is one of building networks and strengthening the capacity of others to advocate for themselves and their communities. In this view, leadership leverages the political and strategic capacities made possible by relative positions of privilege and so transforms the networks, capacities, and privileges of others. Mentoring is an integral part of this