

children, but often in gender- and class-specific ways. For those who are interested in studies of “intersectionality,” her consideration of gender and class in tandem, especially in the theories of Locke and Mill, will be welcome. While race figures much less prominently in this text, Hirschmann’s analysis cultivates potentially productive ground for political theory scholars who would like to pursue this line of inquiry, significantly initiated by the philosopher Charles Mills, in *The Racial Contract* (1997), although it does not appear in Hirschmann’s bibliography.

This text will be of interest primarily to students, scholars, and teachers of political theory and philosophy, who will appreciate Hirschmann’s close, deep, and nuanced interpretations of canonical texts. While her analysis is relevant to the concerns and interests of a multidisciplinary audience, including feminists and those who are interested in the concept of freedom, it will be an arduous slog for those who are not already familiar with most of the texts and authors she analyzes. This is by no means to suggest that this text is irrelevant to contemporary intellectual and political concerns. Indeed, as Hirschmann argues, contemporary assumptions and beliefs about the concept of freedom derive from the earlier contributions of the canonical figures scrutinized in this text. During the present era, when “freedom has become a term of ideological doublespeak” (p. 28), her newest work will inspire and enable scholars who read it to participate effectively in contemporary discourses of freedom, especially on behalf of those who have been ignored and harmed in the name of freedom, even as they aspire to its enduring allure.

***The New Politics of Gender Equality.* By Judith Squires.  
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The new politics of gender equality are something of a labyrinth involving changing and multiple levels of government and a complex

array of aspirations, policies, advocates, movements, and alliances. Judith Squires offers a welcome coherent reading of the recent theoretical and empirical literature on this area. She concentrates mainly on the last 10 years and provides a global coverage of the issues. Three gender equality strategies are identified: Legislative and party quotas for women, women's policy agencies, and gender mainstreaming. These, she argues respectively reflect presence, voice, and process. The reading builds not only a synthesis but also a powerful and insistent critique of strategies, practices, and research on gender equality. Her arguments place representation at the center of public policy. Arguably, she puts all the big questions about women's representation back on the table.

The book is systematically structured. Four overview chapters (one written with Mona Lena Krook) examine the three strategies, their nature, impact, and interaction. They are followed by a chapter each on quotas, women's policy agencies, and mainstreaming. The conclusions consider the demands of diversity policy and the potential of a strategy of mainstreaming in a context of deliberative practice.

Squires has long argued that the achievement of gender equality is a transformative process in which institutions and processes as well as policies must change. She continues that argument here. Two themes run through the book, one focusing on the policies and the other on the research that informs and assesses those policies. Within each, she identifies three interrelated concerns: Essentialism, assimilation, and intersectionality.

The trap of essentialism looms large for Squires. It is a problem because political effectiveness requires a strategic practice that, at least at the outset, is in some sense essentialist. In most political systems, decision-making institutions require the cohesive mobilization of groups seeking entry; hence, they privilege a unitary definition of women. Political institutions aggregate differences. Hence, an undifferentiated category of women is the strongest basis for a claim to be represented, and its use is a strategic necessity for advocates. But this conceptualization sacrifices the understanding of gender as a diverse category.

Assimilation is a related danger as it potentially freezes strategic essentialism. Ideally, strategic equality interventions would transform institutions; in practice, they almost always lead to assimilation into them, which becomes the price of inclusion. No political process avoids this trap. Even radical techniques of equality and representation are themselves absorbed by state practices, interpreted by dominant frames, reformulated to coincide with current neoliberal policy, and so on. So,

inclusion is both a goal and a danger, a matter of some division among feminists. When states make use of feminist expertise to devise policy, the process is welcomed by some as inclusion but criticized by other feminists because it frequently corporatizes consultative processes at the expense of fully representing women.

Intersectionality provides the most difficult challenge. The fragmentation of women's movements is a contributing factor in a process that privileges identities rather than interests. As the movements become more diverse, their political capacity diminishes. One consequence is that an often poorly understood diversity continues to be integrated into equality policies, most recently in the European Union countries, which now require an "intersectional" approach. Women legislators are accused of not advocating for movements because they are frequently constrained by party discipline and may, in addition, ignore intersectionality.

Empirical research gets a lot of blame. It is criticized for being too often essentialist. Yet it is subject to constraints not acknowledged here. While recent research in some countries is admirably sensitive to diversity, this is not established practice across policy sectors, and it rarely extends beyond employment policy research. Failure to take proper account of diversity is not necessarily the fault of researchers. It has taken decades to achieve the differentiated statistics that enable the mapping and analysis of the position of women, and these are available in only a few countries. Fewer still collect data according to race and ethnicity. Moreover, the subjects have a pesky way of failing to realize their combined interests. Thus, in the extensive deliberations around the new British Equality and Human Rights Commission, none of the participating advocates for equality in terms of gender, race, religion, age, or disability proved willing to compromise its goals in favor of those of another strand. Research shares with political practice the two problems of the difficulties of hitting the moving target of multiple and changing subjects and the impossibility of obtaining enough resources to do the work as practitioners would like.

Squires's arguments are cogent, clear, timely, and theoretically comprehensive. But do they suggest solutions? How can all of these obstacles be overcome? One answer appears to be gender mainstreaming, which in its ideal form is a process of transformation. Gender mainstreaming has been adopted now in Europe to become diversity mainstreaming. Yet despite at least a decade of commitment in the EU, and although some states are better than others, no state has

implemented a comprehensive gender mainstreaming policy, not least because of its costliness in terms of both resources and effective scrutiny. What this portends for diversity mainstreaming is too depressing to consider.

Squires is well aware that policymaking is always an imperfect process, generally large scale, crude, and aggregative in its intentions and targets. Bespoke policy, aimed at finely differentiated groups, is possible but little seen in this area, which tends not to be a major government priority anywhere. However, not all actors are ineffective. For example, party women frequently raise issues of gender equality that include some considerations of difference and then find their way onto the political agenda. Thus, some real achievements are not acknowledged. Left unasked is the question of whether an initial strategic aggregation inevitably becomes fixed or if it is a necessary starting point for a future politics of diversity.

While it is unrealistic to expect perfectly effective gender equality policy, we must not stop thinking about what it entails. Squires has written as clear an account of the current dilemmas of equality policies as is possible. She brings together literatures that are not normally considered in relation to one another and offers a powerful exposition of what is at stake.