

whether different gender gaps (participation levels, party, attitudes, and issues) exist across different racial/ethnic populations. The author finds that the gender gap varies to some extent across time, racial/ethnic groups, and types of gaps. For example, although white, Hispanic, and Native American women are more likely to be Democrats than are their male counterparts, no difference exists in the party identification of African Americans and Asian Americans.

The chapters do not all fit together to create a general theory of the gender gap, but that is not the intent, which is to offer a supplemental text that updates and expands on the literature on the gender gap. The book offers students several ways to think about various gender gaps, what they mean for politics, what might cause them, what might affect their size, and so on. The editor does leave out a couple of interesting questions: how the gap works on lower-level offices, and its effects on campaign strategies and outcomes. However, the concluding chapter by Whitaker addresses whether the gender gap can empower women to have a significant effect in policy.

I recommend that anyone teaching an undergraduate course on women and politics consider adopting *Voting the Gender Gap*. It offers a variety of approaches and types of questions and examines different gaps that instructors can use to inform students about how politics is affected by the many aspects of gender. The book is also written at a level that makes the research accessible to undergraduate students.

In an Abusive State: How Neoliberalism Appropriated the Feminist Movement Against Sexual Violence. By Kristin Bumiller. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 2008. 215 pp. \$79.95 cloth, \$22.95 paper.

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What one first notices about the title of this book is a very clever double entendre. The abusive state refers to not only the life conditions of women who are subjected to sexual violence at home or in the public sphere but

also to the character of the governmental actors and institutions involved in the responses to these phenomena. The book is an excellent exploration of how the feminist movement to improve the lives of women affected by rape and battering has been preempted, indeed perhaps hijacked, by the movement for greater criminalization in the United States since the 1970s.

Kristin Bumiller's work includes an interesting and well-documented set of perspectives on the current state of the treatment of sexual violence, including the production of cultural images, the significance of symbolic gang-rape trials, professional discourses on intimate violence, the real lives of battered women, and the implications for international human rights policy. In each of these foci she provides insightful analyses of an agenda gone wrong. The feminist impulse to create humanistic women-centered solutions to structural inequities have been diverted; instead, those "needs" have been reconstructed by professionals who have taken control and have become as undermining of women's autonomy as were their physical abusers. In perhaps one of the two most effective, indeed compelling, segments of the book, Bumiller critiques the agenda of attorneys in rape cases that are orthogonal to the interests of the victim of the violence being prosecuted.

It is common knowledge that defense counsel go to the limit in portraying the rape victim as unsympathetic, either because she was complicit in the events generating the prosecutions or is a sexually promiscuous woman. More illuminating and less studied are the interests of the prosecuting attorneys, which impel them to offer a narrative of rape that meets the simultaneous goals of portraying the alleged perpetrators as lurking, disreputable members of frightening minority groups and the victims as innocent Madonna-like figures.

Via the records from two highly publicized cases, Bumiller effectively demonstrates the latter phenomenon: that it is prosecuting attorneys' assessments of what happened in the course of the sexual violence that they insist be reported in the course of the trial and not the experience of the victim of the attack. In the New Bedford, Massachusetts, gang-rape case that was popularized in the film *The Accused*, the victim's attempt to fully describe and characterize her experience was short-circuited by the lawyers and the court because it differed from the narrative of the state.

Bumiller also analyzes the equally emblematic case of the "Central Park jogger" who was left for dead but survived, without any memory of the event. Although she was unable to report her experience, the case allowed for the narrative that has become welcome in a neoliberal world: that an upper-middle-class woman (potentially all economically

privileged women) was prey for bands of “wilding” minority men. The zeal to ensure that an identified class of perpetrator would be punished for a crime commonly feared by *all* women, horrifically, led to the conviction and incarceration of several very young black and Hispanic men who spent more than a decade in prison on the basis of miscarriages of justice. Bumiller’s thesis is that the impetus to incarcerate as the only resolution to sexual violence has made women pawns of an overreaching, ideologically driven state. The machinery of criminal justice appears to have prospered under this response to the feminist movement’s concern about sexual violence, but women have not.

Bumiller’s work echoes the findings of other scholars detailing how feminists have been unable to control the consequences of the plans they either set in motion or for which they have provided support in the realm of domestic relations. Lenore Weitzman, in a pathbreaking project more than two decades ago (*The Divorce Revolution: The Unintended Social and Economic Consequences for Women and Children*, 1985), documented that the *no fault* reform in divorce law, intended to lessen the stress of families by substituting irreconcilable differences for fault, has had devastating financial consequences for women while proving to be very profitable for men.

Similarly, in *The Illusion of Equality: The Rhetoric and Reality of Divorce Reform* in 1991, Martha Fineman documented that *community property* policies, aimed at equalizing claims of men and women to marital property actually privilege husbands who have greater earning power when marriages dissolve. The Fineman research also intersects with Bumiller’s work in a very specific way: The professionals who become involved in divorce and child custody disputes (like the social workers handling the cases of sexually exploited women in Bumiller’s study) presume that they are more able to make decisions for the “clients” than the clients themselves. In both settings — divorce and sexual violence — pathological situations may be extended rather than resolved, and the voices of women are replaced with those of the police officers, lawyers, social workers, psychologists, and others.

The assessments of numerous feminist scholars reinforce the problem of women losing control over the situations that undermine their health, safety, and well-being, as well as the solutions to same, but Bumiller, through her analyses of both the structural barriers to effective support and the narratives of many women who have experienced sexual abuse and battery, makes a compelling case for change. The changes she envisions entail women retaking control over support systems and

regaining the quality of *community* that marked the feminist movement in the past by providing of shelters, child care, employment assistance, and long-term housing solutions.

In 1989, Carol Smart, a British legal scholar, suggested in *Feminism and the Power of Law* that women need to reject the law's antifeminist *grand theorizing* and its unreformably patriarchal quality and turn instead to other institutions that understand our lives and serve our needs. *In an Abusive State* documents this phenomenon with respect to sexual violence and the potentially more effective responses.

Power, Resistance, and Women Politicians in Cambodia: Discourses of Emancipation. By Mona Lilja. Copenhagen: NIAS Press. 2008. 214 pp. \$70.00 cloth, \$30.00 paper.

Women and Politics in Thailand: Continuity and Change. Edited by Kazuki Iwanaga. Copenhagen: NIAS Press. 2008. 284 pp. \$69.00 cloth, \$29.00 paper.

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Having two books on gender and politics in the two neighboring mainland Southeast Asian countries of Cambodia and Thailand in the same year (2008) is an extraordinary event. That both are published by NIAS Press suggests the willingness of its editorial board to take risks and venture into understudied, cutting-edge territories. As pioneering studies, both works face the challenge of establishing the fundamental structure of assumptions for each country respectively. The fundamental framework guiding Western studies of gender and politics is the assumption of male hegemony over the political process. Given the growing body of anthropological and historical literature on the remarkable position of women in Southeast Asia, I find the uncritical incorporation of this paradigmatic formula unfortunate. In this review, I first summarize the two books and then conclude with a brief indication of certain points of contention.

Power, Resistance, and Women Politicians in Cambodia assumes a place in the historiography of gender and politics of this country as one of the first to engage the topic. In it, Mona Lilja seeks "an exploration of the countless