

Overall, this volume is thought-provoking, especially for those who have not spent much time thinking about how democracy's focus on equality does or does not contribute to the attainment of excellence. While most of the chapters are infused with an optimistic faith in the virtues of democracy, the reader may be left with an uneasy understanding that those virtues are not guaranteed. The reliance on faith, chance and the emergence of individuals willing to take the risks and provide the guidance needed to propel the egalitarian masses toward excellence brings into question the wisdom of pursuing further democratic reforms to address the democratic deficit. In light of this, the chapter by Gary that suggests reviving the democratic possibility approach provides much to think about.

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State Feminism and Political Representation

Joni Lovenduski, ed.

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Lovenduski's edited volume is an 11-country (10 western European countries and the US), analysis of the effects of women's policy agencies on efforts to increase the representation of women in the political process—in legislatures, on party lists and in public administration. The book is the product of a 10-year collaboration among scholars involved in the Research Network on Gender Politics and the State and it exhibits the rich rewards that such a lengthy and involved affiliation among like-minded scholars can produce.

The study tests a set of five related hypotheses regarding the relationship between women's movements and women's policy agencies on the effectiveness of realizing descriptive and substantive representation for women in the practice of governing. Each country chapter tests these hypotheses in the context of three national debates on political representation. The choice of debates is that of the individual authors, but in the context of the broader project, the intention is to examine debates that have, in fact, included demands from women for representation, as well as debates that one might have presumed would have piqued the interest of the organized women's movement, but in which they did not participate.

After consideration of 33 cases, the study concludes that women's movements are most likely to succeed in achieving higher levels of representation when the issue has a high priority for them and the movement is cohesive, that the focus and coherence of the women's movement is more significant in achieving success than the involvement of women's policy agencies, but that when the women's movement and the women's policy agencies are aligned and agreed on the priority of the issue, the likelihood of including more women in the political process is enhanced. The authors also find that struggles for women's representation are generally more successful when they are aligned with a governing party or coalition on the left and when the demands are being made in an open or moderately open policy environment, that is, when the policy environment has no fixed power balance and allows for the participation of a wide range of individuals and groups (p. 16). Intriguingly, they also conclude that women's movements had more success when countermovements were strong (the US Equal Rights Amendment being the notable exception), a finding that can be explained by the fact that a cohesive women's movement with a high priority issue is both likely to incite resistance but also achieve success (pp. 285–86).

The systematizing of the analysis makes for a bit of a dry read, but the discussions of the politics surrounding the various debates commends the book to readers who are less inclined to feminist empiricism. Particularly interesting from a

comparative perspective are the cross-national similarities in the arguments opposing positive measures to increase women's participation in the political process. Quotas were frequently resisted on grounds of merit (Belgium, Finland, Netherlands, Spain, UK) or the dogma of universal citizenship (France). In many instances, however, women's groups successfully countered these claims by demonstrating that the existence of many talented and qualified women still did not guarantee access to the political system. As well, women's groups were often successful when their campaigns for increased representation was framed in terms of parity (France, Italy) or through gender neutral language, as in "no gender shall have more than 60 per cent of the seats in the legislature or places on the places on the party list."

Lovenduski's collection is firmly entrenched in a world view that asserts the solidity of women and men as social categories. Given the contributions of feminist post-structuralists to our thinking about identities—for example, their multiplicity and their production through the operations of power—the steadfastness with which the authors of this collection hold to "women" is remarkable. Moreover, because debates about whether it is even possible to mobilize in the name of a universal woman have been animating the women's movement since at least the early 1980s, the fact that the complexity of the subject position is left unremarked suggests that an (arguably) too-sharply focused lens was applied to the activities of the women's movements in the subject countries. Hence, the book provides an enlightening assessment of a certain form of political representation and a certain objective of state feminism. Of course, one might counter that "women" and "men" continue to be meaningful identities within the sphere of political institutions, thus justifying the continued use of the unmodified categories. Indeed, this formulation may tell us something about what is represent-able within the realm of political institutions. Perhaps it is in this question—what is represent-able—that feminist empiricists and post-structuralists might find some common terrain for future investigation.

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Un modèle québécois? Gouvernance et participation dans la gestion publique

Pierre Hamel et Bernard Jouve

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Expression consacrée en études québécoises, le « modèle québécois » fait ponctuellement l'objet de débats plus ou moins éclairés, au gré de l'évolution des affaires publiques au Québec. Par exemple, alors que le Parti libéral du Québec (PLQ) proposait une rupture définitive avec le modèle québécois lors de la campagne électorale de 1998, il visait plutôt à le réformer de fond en comble pour mieux le préserver lors de la campagne électorale de 2003, pour finalement s'en faire le défenseur aujourd'hui, dans le contexte de la campagne électorale de 2007. Le Parti québécois (PQ), de son côté, n'a pas fait preuve de beaucoup plus de constance durant cette même décennie, particulièrement durant les années Bouchard (1996–2001), bien que sa rhétorique politique présente toujours le modèle québécois comme un acquis historique d'envergure dont il faut développer les principales caractéristiques. Bref, tantôt porté aux nues, tantôt obnubilé, le modèle québécois demeure porteur d'enjeux politiques structurants et représente un objet d'étude à peu près obligatoire pour quiconque s'intéresse à la politique québécoise. Dans la mesure où elle vise à enrichir notre compréhension de certaines composantes fondamentales du modèle québécois, plus précisément en ce qui concerne « l'évolution des formes institutionnelles de la participation des usagers/citoyens dans les secteurs de la santé et de l'éducation », la