women talking politics

NEWSLETTER OF THE AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND WOMEN AND POLITICS NETWORK

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Sex, Status and Style: Women Politicians Talk About the Media

By **Susan Fountaine**, Massey University

This article discusses women politicians' perceptions of the news coverage they receive, drawing on interviews with twelve Labour and seven National Party MPs: Lianne Dalziel, Annette King, Ruth Dyson, Helen Clark, Nanaia Mahuta, Marian Hobbs, Georgina Beyer, Margaret Wilson, Dianne Yates, Judy Keall, Helen Duncan, Jill Pettis, Annabel Young, Pansy Wong, Marie Hasler, Belinda Vernon, Katherine O'Regan, Joy Quigley and Christine Fletcher[1]. Former New Zealand First MP Deborah Morris was also interviewed.

The overall question guiding the interviews was whether women MPs and candidates perceive that the news coverage they receive is influenced by gender. The interview material shows a mixed response from participants, and some contradictions within individual interviews. A number of participants felt gender does impact on media coverage, in both positive and negative ways. This is discussed further in the following section. On the other hand, some participants felt that gender has little or next to no bearing on the coverage they received and consider status (within the party and as a list or electorate MP), personality and other personal characteristics, such as ethnicity, to be more important factors.

Gender and Media Coverage

A number of the interviewees noted a general tendency for coverage of women politicians to include references to appearance, voice, age and family, in a way that coverage of men does not. The women discussed these 'gendered' news frames in general terms or as they applied to colleagues. For example, Helen Duncan pointed out, 'a male politician could wear the same suit for a week and nobody would comment. If a woman politician, a woman leader, wore the same suit for a week, there would be a headline, when's she going to change her clothes?' Similarly, Labour MP Ruth Dyson said, 'Generally, the gender stereotypes in coverage still exist in terms of comments about voice level, type of clothes, whether you are married or not, whether you have children or not – these issues are only important if you a woman of course –

[1] The interviews were done for my doctorate research on gender, news and politics, which will also include a content analysis of the1999 election campaign coverage and a case study of the Wellington Central electorate. The interviews were conducted in the period June 1999 to February 2000.

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THE AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND WOMEN AND POLITICS NETWORK

The idea was born out of a meeting of the NZ Political Studies Association Conference.

The aim is to promote communication between women teaching, researching or interested /involved in politics/public policy (in paid or unpaid work).

The newsletter is published twice a year. Until 1998 it was published by women from the Department of Political Studies at the University of Auckland, and the School of Social Sciences at the Auckland Institute of Technology. At the Australasian Political Studies Association Conference in December 1998, women from Victoria University of Wellington offered to take a turn at publishing the newsletter. The Editor for this issue is Jean Drage. Thanks to Charlotte Connell for her formatting skills.

We have had a great response to issues one and two of the Women Talking Politics newsletter. Your comments are welcome so please let us know what you think. We are keen to have a comments column.

Contributions and shared resources. We are interested in receiving material for publication in the newsletter – articles, book and conference reviews, information about teaching and research, relevant conferences, and letters to the editor are all welcome. Student input is also welcomed.

Also help build up resources by sharing details of relevant books, papers and web pages.

Please forward contributions to: Jean Drage, School of Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington. Disk copies, preferably in MSWord would be appreciated.
Phone: (04) 476 7486
Email: J.Drage@xtra.co.nz

one almost assumes that men don't wear clothes, get married or have children!'

For some of the women, this attention to appearance was distressing. Labour's Otaki MP Judy Keall indicated feeling 'terrific pressure to actually sort of have your hair right and be dressed reasonably; I find it a terrible strain actually.' However, National Party MPs Pansy Wong and Marie Hasler believed media interest in women's appearance simply reflects the greater options open to women in terms of the way they look. Margaret Wilson suggested the important thing for politicians is that they should not 'aggravate' the public through their appearance.

Labour MP Lianne Dalziel and National's Christine Fletcher recounted particular instances when they felt that gender was a factor in news coverage. Dalziel remembered 'the editor of the Dominion describing me as the increasingly shrill member for Christchurch Central, in an editorial once. That was my personal favourite, not that I'm bitter (laughs) but I just thought that language was really directed at a woman.' Christine Fletcher felt she was often categorised as 'soft' and 'flaky', and that there was a gender dimension to this. In particular, she talked about the day she resigned as a minister, one of the most difficult days of her life: '…I felt that normal human emotion of saying farewell to my staff and I can remember the coverage I got, it was all close up photographs to show whether or not I was crying…For a man to cry in Parliament, it makes him - look at Doug Graham when he's talking about resolution of treaty issues - …it increased his mana. When Graham Thorne cried during the adoption debate, that increased his mana. Chris resigns…and it didn't increase my mana, it's 'oh flaky', you know.'

For Pansy Wong and Georgina Beyer, issues of gender are interwoven with other personal characteristics, namely ethnicity and sexual orientation. Perhaps because she is the only Asian MP in Parliament, Wong felt that her ethnicity is a more dominant identifier than her gender, with the media regarding her as an expert on issues such as immigration and race relations. On the other hand, gender has been a 'news peg' at several times in Georgina Beyer's political career. When she first put herself forward for election in the local body elections of 1992, the *Evening Post* headline read 'Transsexual stands for Council'. Speaking prior to the 1999 general election, Beyer indicated that her sexuality had become less of

an issue over time: 'It took a little while before that became a tired old story, because how many times can you tell the same story? And it really was, in my opinion, irrelevant but I knew that they had to satiate their appetites over it before they came to the realisation themselves that it was a bit of a dead horse.' However, when I spoke to her after the election, Beyer expressed disappointment over some media coverage during the latter stages of the campaign (a *Holmes* story in particular), which was preoccupied with her gender.

The intersection of age and gender also has implications for media coverage. In an interview, former New Zealand First MP Deborah Morris spoke of how her youth was of added interest to the media – when her name was published it was often followed by her age. There was a lot of interest in fashion and hair colour, and when she was working with Jenny Shipley comparisons were made on the basis of hair and lipstick. At the other end of the scale, Labour's Dianne Yates commented that women over 45 do not appear to be of interest to the media. And Marian Hobbs recalled that when she first came into Parliament the *Evening Post* said that at 49, she was past it - too old for leadership.

Politicians who have an interest in 'women's issues' struggle to engage the media. Christine Fletcher said the issue of school zoning was judged a soft issue – a misinterpretation in her view. Dianne Yates, a Labour list MP who works hard at her relationship with the media, finds there is a general lack of interest in women's affairs and things like matrimonial issues and paid parental leave. In addition, she notes that, 'a pair of trousers is seen to equal knowledge', and different standards are applied to men and women in terms of their behaviour in the House. On the other hand, Pansy Wong argues that one of the main difficulties for women MPs is the assumption that they are only interested in particular issues, such as paid parental leave, and are less likely to be asked to comment on economic issues, an area in which she is well qualified.

However, some participants pointed out that gender is not always a negative force – in some instances it has no bearing on news coverage, and at times it can work in favour of the woman politician. National MPs Marie Hasler and Belinda Vernon both noted that some men, as well as some women, have difficulties with the media. Belinda Vernon said, 'again I think it comes down to personality. Nine times out of ten it's personality that gets you into strife rather than your gender.'

A number of participants mentioned occasions when gender is beneficial to media coverage. Several participants mentioned that being a woman can constitute an electoral advantage, and this may have flow on effects for media coverage. Some media, such as magazines, are more accessible to women, and there is greater opportunity for photo opportunities, as Annette King explained: '…I am really comfortable in a community setting…so that background I have because of my gender really is useful to help me get into places which can lead to coverage…I think this is mainly women, but your instinct is to actually go to the children and be with them so you can get opportunities that appeal to photographers or media coverage or whatever, rather than a set-up shot.'

National Party list MP, Annabel Young, who takes a very pro-active approach to media coverage, doesn't believe gender has worked against her in dealing with the media. She identifies both advantages and disadvantages, but no overall impediment; 'you just play the angles differently'.

Party Status and Media Access

It has been documented that MMP is good for women's representation[2], and over half of the current women MPs are list members. However, list MPs have been referred to as 'second class' by the media, political colleagues and the public – a situation of 'serious concern' to some observers[3]. Furthermore, the comments of some interviewees suggest list MPs face greater difficulties securing media coverage. In light of evidence that women MPs are less visible in the media anyway, the added challenges created by the media's slowness to adapt to MMP may be a burden unfairly shouldered by women list members.

According to National list MP Annabel Young, a 'pecking order' determines what, if any, news coverage a politician receives: 'It's certainly easier to get coverage as an MP than it is as a candidate, and as minister than an MP. I mean there's a real pecking order there and you've just got to understand where you are in the pecking order and know that to get into the paper you

[2] J. Drage and R. Nicholl, 'The 1999 elections – What it meant for women', *Women Talking Politics*, 2, Summer 2000, pp.2-3.
[3] L.J. Ward, 'Second class MPs'? New Zealand's adaption to Mixed-Member Parliamentary Representation', *Political Science*, 49 (2), 1998, p.135.

need an angle.' This viewpoint is hardly surprising, as the news media's attraction to sources with status and power is well documented[4], and the focus on party leaders, in particular, appears to have increased in the television era.[5] However, a further point about status came out in discussion with some list MPs. For example, National MP Katherine O'Regan felt the issue of media coverage is more complex for list MPs, saying 'I'm only a list MP. I shouldn't say only a list MP, but I am a list MP, and you don't have the same sense of ownership of your electorate that you happen to be in…until I win the [Tauranga] seat…I cannot really feel that I have any power, if you like, to march in and say 'hey look, I'm the local member here', because that local member - despite MMP - being the local member, voted by the constituents, actually carries a lot of weight.' For her colleague Joy Quigley (now retired from politics), being a list MP in the 1996-9 term after two terms as a constituency member, created challenges in terms of publicity generation. With a self confessed dislike of publicity, she found it difficult to promote herself and her party away from a constituency base: 'I haven't utilised every opportunity I've had to be able to say 'hey the National Party is the best party for government in this country', and that is one of the primary roles of a list MP'. Similarly, Labour list member Helen Duncan felt that one reason she did not receive a lot of coverage was because she was, in a sense, competing with a number of other MPs in her area: 'I don't think it's got a lot to do with gender, I think it's got more to do with party politics and the difference between constituency and list MPs.'

Conclusion

Overall, the interviews reveal that women politicians in New Zealand have mixed feelings about the influence of gender on news media coverage. Some women argue that gender is less important than status and personality; others believe gender does occasionally impact on coverage. It may be, as British researchers suggest, that 'political women really do believe what they say about the journalistic motivations behind the discursive framing of women, or perhaps their generous readings of unconscious sexism are a survival mechanism, an acknowledgement of their need for the media's patronage'[6].

Certainly, gender was an issue at various times throughout the 1999 campaign, from the 'Battle of the Xenas' and the fallout over the list placings of New Zealand First MPs Jenny Bloxham and Robyn McDonald, to the much touted election of New Zealand (and possibly the world's) first transsexual MP. Further attention to media content will give us a greater understanding of gendered news frames, and the warning sounded by Sreberny and Mohammadi should be heeded not only by women politicians, but all of us: if women politicians make excuses about the male dominated media and do not take media sexism seriously, it is difficult to see how these images can be transformed, or how strategies for change can be developed.

APSA Women's Caucus 2000.

Jennifer Curtin, Outgoing Women's Caucus Representative. (Jennifer.Curtin@aph.gov.au).

The Caucus meeting this year was extremely well attended, which was great to see, and a variety of issues were discussed. At Marian Sawer's initiative, the Caucus Constitution was finally amended to reflect the current practice of electing representative to APSA executive and awarding the Women and Politics Prize biennially. The next prize will be awarded in 2001, so all politics students who are writing on women's/feminist politics, keep this in mind. It is hoped that information and flyers about the prize will be distributed from November onwards. If you don't hear something soon, contact the convenor, Prof. Sheila Jeffreys at the University of Melbourne.

At APSA this year I convened a discussion session on Teaching Women/Feminist Politics: Future Directions? Barbara Sullivan (University of Queensland), Kath Gelber (University of Sydney), Sheila Jeffreys (University of Melbourne) and Helena Catt (University of Auckland) provided brief overviews of the state of play at their respective universities. An interesting discussion followed around how to attract students, women and men, the possibility of an internship component with women's

[4] C. Seymour-Ure, 'Leaders', in J. Seaton and B. Pimlott (Eds.), *The media in British politics*, Aldershot, Britain: Dartmouth, 1987, pp.3-24.
[5] R. Negrine, *Politics and the Mass Media in Britain* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge, 1994.
[6] A. Sreberny-Mohammadi, and K. Ross, 'Women MPs and the media: Representing the body politic', in J. Lovenduski & P. Norris (Eds), *Women in Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p.116.

organisations, and offering explicit feminist sections within more general units.

Louise Chappell and I had begun monitoring the number of women employed in the discipline within Australian and New Zealand universities. I am hoping to continue with this project, with the help of our new APSA President, Helena Catt. If anyone else is interested in being involved, don't hesitate to contact me.

At last year's APSA, Louise Chappell, Lisa Hill and I presented a gender audit of the Australian Journal of Political Science. The findings were not very positive for women and it appeared that having women strategically positioned on the editorial board was an important part of ensuring women's work was published. So it was good to see that Andrew Parkin, current editor of AJPS included the gender audit in his report, tabled at the APSA AGM, and he had updated figures on the state of play over the past 12 months.

Marian Sawer raised her concern with the way disciplinary histories were being published with little or no acknowledgment of the contribution of women's/feminist politics. In order to ensure that the same omissions do not occur in Australasian disciplinary histories Women's Caucus decided to:

- put a resolution to the APSA AGM that any further conferences or publications aimed at recording the history of the discipline in Australia and NZ should ensure that the contribution of women and of feminist scholarship be included (the motion was duly passed at the AGM);
- set up a working group be established to draw up projects and opportunities and act as a surveillance mechanism. Marian Sawer is to convene the group, other members include Lenore Coultheart and Jan Jindy Pettman.

Don't forget the new journal *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, which has a home base at the ANU and will accept articles on women's studies and international relations. For more information on the journal see the web site, or by email ifjp@anu.edu.au.

The new Women's Caucus Representative is Christine Jennett, (cjennett@csu.edu.au.).

Does Size Matter?: Testing Critical Mass in the New Zealand House of Representatives.[7]

By **Sandra Grey,** MA (Hons) Auckland, Politics Program, RSSS, ANU.

It is often claimed that women will only impact upon the political arena once they reach a critical mass. In the last thirty years the number of women in the New Zealand House of Representatives has risen from 4 to 37. Have women in parliament reached a critical mass that allows them to impact upon the political arena?

Critical mass is a phrase commonly used by politicians and political scientists, even though the theory remains relatively undeveloped.[8] The theory of critical mass is based on the belief that the composition of a public body will shape the processes and policies of the organisation. Group proportions set out in the work of Rosabeth Moss Kanter seem to form the basis of many critical mass investigations.

> *Uniform groups have only one kind of person, one significant social type. ... Skewed groups are those in which there is a larger preponderance of one type over another, up to a ratio of perhaps 85:15. .... Next, tilted groups begin to move toward less extreme distributions and less exaggerated effects. In this situation, with a ratio of perhaps 65:35, dominants are just a majority and tokens a minority. ... Finally, at a typological ration of about 60:40 down to 50:50, the group becomes balanced .* [9]

In order to test these tentative group proportions I developed three critical mass expectations from the work of Kanter, Dahlerup, Norris, Vega and Firestone, Wilford et al, and Jaquette.[10] The three areas of politics expected to change

[7] This article is a condensed summary of my unpublished MA thesis completed at Auckland University in 1999.

[8] A large number of political scientists have mentioned critical mass including; Berkman, 1993; Catt, 1999; Dahlerup, 1988; Jaquette, 1997; Kathlene, 1994; Lovenduski, 1996; Norris, 1996; Phillips, 1995; Randall, 1987; Sapiro, 1981; Simms and Sawer, 1993; Squires, 1996; Thomas, 1991; Welch et. al, 1991.

[9] Rosabeth Moss Kanter. 'Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Response to Token Women.' *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 5, 1976, p. 966.

[10] Kanter, 1976; Drude Dahlerup, 'From a Small to a Large Minority: Women in Scandinavian Politics,' *Scandinavian Political Studies* 11, no. 4, 1988, pp. 275-298; Pippa Norris, 'Women Politicians: Transforming Westminster?' *Parliamentary Affairs* 49, no. 1, 1996, pp. 89-102; Jane S. Jaquette, 'Women in Power: From Tokenism to Critical Mass.' *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1997, pp. 23-37; Arturo Vega and Juanita M Firestone, 'The Effects of Gender on Congressional Behaviour and the Substantive Representation of Women.' *Legislative Studies Quarterly* XX, no. 2, 1995, pp. 213-222; Rick Wilford, Robert Miller, Yolanda Bell,

once women reach critical mass in parliament are the political culture, agenda, and policy outcomes.

To test the impact of increased female representation in the New Zealand House of Representatives I carried out a close analysis of parliamentary debates on child care and parental leave from 1972 until the general election in November of 1999. Child care and parental leave were mentioned in sixty-five volumes of Hansard Parliamentary Debates between 1972 and 1999. The aim was to see if a correlation existed between changes in the volume, tone, and outcome of parliamentary debates and the number of women in national politics.

Impacting on the Agenda

One of the most common assumptions in critical mass literature centres on the political agenda. 'If women are underrepresented in governing institutions, women's unique priorities could be ignored by male representatives who do not share their concern'[11] There was evidence in the child care and parental leave debates from 1975 to 1999 of changes in the political agenda as the number of women politicians' rose. (The two 'women's issues' were not debated in 1972, 1973, or 1974.)

There was a change in who took part in debates of child care and parental leave. Male politicians were more active than their female colleagues in debates held between 1975 and 1987, outnumbering women MPs two to one in terms of incidences of discussion. But from 1988 until 1999, women politicians spoke about child care and parental leave almost four times as often as their male counterparts. [12] As the number of women in parliament rose there were also a change in who initiated debates on child care and parental leave. Overall women MPs prompted discussion on the issues twice as often as their male counterparts, but from 1994 to 1999 it was only women who started debates on parental leave and child care.

If one woman was responsible for all incidences of discussion, then what would be important in the political arena would be critical individuals, not a critical mass. There was no evidence that any individual was responsible for all debates on child care and parental leave. Neither was there any evidence that a critical party was responsible for all incidences of debate. MPs from both major parties, National and Labour, were equally likely to debate the 'women's issues'.

The increased participation of female MPs in debates of child care and parental leave after 1988 fits the implicit assumption in critical mass literature that any existing gender gap on 'women's issues' will become more marked when female representation reaches critical mass. The fact that the two 'women's issues' were found in a greater variety of debates after 1988 is further evidence that women MPs had reached critical mass in the late 1980s. The inclusion of child care and parental leave in parliamentary debates of 27 different bills and in general debates in 1988, 1989, 1994, and 1995 fits the assumption that 'women's issues' will become more mainstream once women achieve critical mass.[13] In 1987 women occupied 14.4% of the seats in the New Zealand House of Representatives – close to the token representation level of 15% outlined by Kanter and it seems a level high enough to impact upon agenda.

Impacting on the Culture of Parliament

Another common assumption in critical mass literature is the idea that while men dominate parliament numerically, masculine behaviour will shape parliamentary processes and debating styles. [14] This assumption implies that behaviour in parliament is gendered. The close analysis of child care and parental leave debates from 1975 to 1999 provided evidence of gendered patterns of behaviour in the New Zealand parliament. Male MPs were both more aggressive in their use of personal attacks and interjections than women in the House. [15]

While female MPs were less aggressive than their male colleagues from 1975 to 1999, there was little evidence that this, coupled with the rising number of women in parliament, made the debating chamber a 'nicer' place as implied in critical mass literature. (See Figure 1.1)

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and Fred Donoghue, 'In their own voices: Women councillors in Northern Ireland.' *Public Administration* 71, Autumn 1993, pp. 341-356.

[11] Kim Fridkin Kahn, *The Political Consequences of Being a Woman: How Stereotypes Influence the Conduct and Consequences of Political Campaigns,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 137.

[12] Sandra Grey, *Does Size Matter?: Women and Critical Mass in the New Zealand Parliament,* Unpublished Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Politics. University of Auckland, 1999, p. 43-49.

[13] Grey, 1999, pp. 55-61.

[14] Drude Dahlerup, 1988; Pippa Norris, 1996.

[15] Grey, 1999, pp. 74-88.

Figure 1.1: Levels of aggressive behaviour in the New Zealand House of Representatives during debates on parental leave and child care, 1975 – 1999

Year	No. of aggressive* lines	Total no. of lines of debate	Aggression %	Female MPs
1975	15.5	785	1.97	4 (4.6%)
1976	0	67	0.00	
1977	0	13	0.00	
1978	6	224	2.68	4 (4.3%)
1979	24.5	533	4.60	
1980	67	2021	3.32	
1981	0	14	0.00	8 (8.7%)
1982	0	49	0.00	
1983	-	-	-	
1984	2	44	4.55	12 (12.6%)
1985	-	-	-	
1986	38	437	8.70	
1987	25	567	4.41	14 (14.4%)
1988	420	5520	7.61	
1989	298	4605	6.47	
1990	268	3875	6.92	16 (16.5%)
1991	148	3432	4.31	
1992	44	1095	4.02	
1993	92	1289	7.14	21 (21.2%)
1994	73	2895	2.52	
1995	106	3210	3.30	
1996	2.5	510	0.49	35 (29.2%)
1997	0	170	-	
1998	89	1930	4.61	
1999	158	1177	13.42	37 (30%)

*All lines within the debates which covered points of order, interjections, and personal attacks were counted as aggressive lines.

Women MPs not only failed to put a damper on aggressive behaviour in the New Zealand debating chamber, women MPs became more aggressive in their own use of personal attacks and interjections.[16] It seems that women politicians adapted to the masculine political culture, a trend also found by Joni Lovenduski in her study of British politicians.[17]

Another expected change as women reach critical mass is that they will face less hostility and fewer discriminatory remarks during parliamentary debates. For example, gender labeling is expected to decrease as a group moves from their token position.[18] But being a woman in the New Zealand House of Representatives is obviously noteworthy throughout the 25 years under scrutiny. In all there were 30 references to another MP's gender during debates of child care and parental leave between 1975 and 1999, only five of these were made about men. Sexist remarks are also expected to decrease when women reach critical mass. [19] Female MPs were the subjects in 14 of the 17 harassing remarks found in the discussions of child care and parental leave from 1975 to 1999. Over half of the sexist remarks were made between 1988 and 1990, at a point when women occupied 14.4 percent of seats in the New Zealand parliament.

While the continuation of gender labeling and sexist remarks suggest women are still a token group in the New Zealand House of Representatives of the 1990s, there was a change in the tone of gendered comments. From 1988 12 of the 20 comments which noted a female MPs gender were positive representations of womanhood. Pride was also exhibited in the fact that six of the seven references made by female MPs to their own gender come after 1988. Despite the limited changes in tone and the fact that women MPs were less aggressive during debates, the rising levels of female representation in the New Zealand House of Representatives did not made the debating chamber a more civil and less aggressive place.

Impacting on Policy

The final critical mass assumption investigated was the impact of women MPs upon party and public policy. In order to detect any change in public policy I looked at New Zealand's parental leave laws, as well as party policy as represented in parliamentary debates. The assumption is that while men dominate legislative bodies they will affect policy making and implementation in ways that are detrimental to women as a group.[20]

Current New Zealand legislation provides for unpaid leave of 52 weeks for parents who were employed over ten hours a week for a full 12 months before the expected date of delivery. In

[16] Grey, 1999, pp. 88-98.
[17] Joni Lovenduski, 'Sex, Gender and British Politics.' *Parliamentary Affairs* 49, no. 1, 1996, p. 14.
[18] Kanter, 1976, p. 968.
[19] Dahlerup, 1988, p. 284.
[20] Lovenduski, 1996, p. 4.

comparison with parental leave laws in Britain where there is no qualifying period for maternity leave or Sweden where parental leave laws provide up to 15 months paid leave, New Zealand's law falls decidedly short. The New Zealand legislation for parents also fails to meet international standards for parental leave. For example, the International Labour Organisation Convention 103: Maternity Protection Convention (1953) calls for a minimum of 12 weeks' paid leave, while the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (1981) binds states to introduce paid maternity leave. The current provisions in New Zealand also fail to meet ideals for parental leave set out in the feminist literature. For feminists, adequate paid parental leave is seen as essential for ensuring greater choice for women in society.[21]

The Parental Tax Credit introduced by National in 1999, combined with the decision to send Laila Harre's Paid Parental Leave Bill to a select committee, showed limited progress in the area of parental leave policy. This progress came at a time when women make up 29.2 percent of parliament's ranks in New Zealand – perhaps nearing a critical mass – however, the changes still fall far short of all outside benchmarks.

In order to determine if there was any correlation between the under-representation of women in parliament and failings within New Zealand parental leave legislation, the attitude of MPs was compared with feminist views of parental leave. Along with the noticeable party divisions on parental leave policy (with parties of the right opposed to the ideal of paid parental leave), gender divisions in the New Zealand parliamentary debates of parental leave policy were evident. [22] Most female MPs who have sat in the New Zealand parliament since 1972 have supported the concept of Government regulated parental leave, while male MPs have often been more wary of state regulated provisions for parents. In the 1979 and 1980 debates on parental leave, all of the female MPs who debated parental leave in the House threw their weight in behind statutory leave provisions for parents. Critical mass literature implies that this commitment to policies that benefit women should increase as the female presence in parliament rises. This is not the case in the New Zealand parliamentary debates of parental leave. In the second reading of the Paid Parental Leave Bill in 1998 a number of women expressed opposition, or were at the very least non-committal to, paid leave provisions for parents. By the late 1990s ideology appears the strongest factor in shaping the way some women MPs act in terms of parental leave policy. There is no evidence that female MPs had the strength of numbers (or backing from the numerically dominant male group) to effect change in legislation even when such a change is desired.

Conclusion

Evidence from close analysis of parental leave and child care debates in the New Zealand House of Representatives indicates that increasing the number of women in parliament is not enough on its own to affect decision-making in the political arena. The concept of critical mass, taken from the physical sciences, needs to be adapted if used in the social sciences to take into account human interaction. First, the level of critical mass may vary dependent on whether a group wants to impact on the agenda, or on political processes and outcomes. Second, positional power and perceived power needs to be considered when measuring group impact.

Reaching and surpassing token status (of 14.4% in 1987) in the New Zealand House of Representatives may have given New Zealand women politicians enough strength to keep parental leave and child care high on the public agenda, but there is no evidence that they were able to implement changes to political processes or outcomes. It seems that social, cultural, and institutional barriers for women in the New Zealand parliament even exist when female MPs occupy almost a third of the parliamentary seats.

[21] Suzanne Franzway, Dianne Court, and R W Connell, *Staking a Claim: Feminism, bureaucracy and the state,* Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989; Submissions from the Women's Electoral Lobby (Nelson): Maternity Leave and Employment Protection Bill. Nelson: WEL, 1980. Select Committee Submission, LE/80/5.

[22] For a fuller discussion of this issue see Grey, 1999, pp. 126-129.

Sorting the Women from the Maidens.
Or, what you can tell about the new women MPs from their maiden speeches that you didn't know already.

By **Kate McMillan and Margaret Cousins**, School of Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington.[23]

In her maiden speech to Parliament on 15 February 2000 new National list MP Anne Tolley cast her eyes around the parliamentary chamber, and, noting the number and diversity of women there, ringingly declared the doors of parliament to now be "wide open" to women. Certainly more women than ever before had made it through the doors of parliament since the introduction of MMP in 1996. In 1999 eleven new women MPs joined the 26 sitting women MPs, meaning 30.8% of NZ parliamentarians were women, an increase of less than 1% from 1996, but an increase of 9.6% from the pre-MMP 1993-1996 term.[24]

Some of these new women MPs were no strangers to the public eye - in particular Labour's Margaret Wilson and Georgina Beyer and the Greens' Sue Kedgley and Sue Bradford had already made quite a mark on the national consciousness. Information about each of the women had also been available in a variety of pre-election publicity material. But the maiden speeches, with their unique combination of the highly formal and the very personal, provided new insights into both the lesser and better known new women MPs. As is traditional, the new MPs used their maiden speeches to formally introduce themselves to the House and to the country: they stated their political ideals and goals, shared their formative experiences, identified their constituencies, and gave thanks to those who had inspired and supported them in their journey to Parliament. In so doing, they gave us an idea of what we might expect from them during their political careers.

In their 1983 research on women's maiden speeches between 1933 and 1982,[25] Pauline Horn, Margaret Leniston and Pauline Lewis found that the main topics addressed by women MPs in their maiden speeches were their electorate, their own political party and women. Almost a decade later these concerns were still high on the agenda. This article examines the maiden speeches of the new women MPs of 1999 for the insights they provide on five issues: (i) the influence of cultural and family background on those women's political values and ideals (ii) the influence of feminism on those ideals (iii) their professional background (iv) their identification with a constituency and; (v) their political goals.

(i) Cultural and family influences on political ideals and values

Cultural and family background was clearly a source of strength to many of the new women MPs. Labour's Georgina Beyer, the only Maori amongst the new women MPs, was quick to make this point:

> *I am proud to be a New Zealander of Maori descent from primarily the iwi of Te Atiawa, Ngati Mutunga, Ngati Raukawa and Ngati Porou…I have to say that the strength and the aroha that I hope to bring to this House will be forged from those heritage and whakapapa links.*

Others looked to ancestors who had come to New Zealand in search of a better life. Labour's Margaret Wilson identified her family heritage as a source of her political values and ideals:

> *…as the daughter of families who came to New Zealand in the 1860s to escape the poverty, hardships and inequality of a class system, I feel an obligation to carry on my ancestor's dream of creating a new society founded on the principles of equality, independence, social, economic and cultural justice.*

Labour's Winnie Laban saw the larger history of Pacific peoples in New Zealand "writ small" in her own parents' journey from Western Samoa in 1954 with an "immigrant's dream": to work hard in order to provide their children with education and opportunity in New Zealand. For her the fact that many Pacific Islands people were now at the 'bottom of the social and economic ladder', their lives 'shattered' by economic restructuring indicated that:

> *The market has dominated whilst the State and our communities have been weakened. It is time to redress that balance.*

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[23] With thanks to Janet Cockburn for collecting all the speeches.

[24] Women made up 21.2% of NZ parliamentarians during the 1993-1996 term, the last under FPP. At the 1996 election 35 women were elected into the new MMP parliament, shortly joined by a 36th when National's Annabel Young replaced the departing Jim Gerard. Annabel Young's arrival brought the total of women MPs up to 30% of the total number of MPs.

[25] Pauline Horn, Margaret Leniston and Pauline Lewis, 'The Maiden Speeches of New Zealand Women MPs', *Political Science,* Vol.35, No. 2, December 1983, pp 229-265.

ACT's Penny Webster, on the other hand, took quite a different message from the dream of a 'better way' that had led her ancestors first to leave Ireland for England, and then her parents to leave England for New Zealand with five young daughters in tow. She credited both her cultural and religious heritage with shaping a political philosophy based on individual choice and personal responsibility:

> *I come from a large Irish Catholic heritage. A family heritage that taught me individual responsibility. I am grateful for my Catholic upbringing that grounded me in the idea that God gave us free will and choice. We alone decide the path we should take.*

National's Katherine Rich took great pride in her Scottish heritage:

> *Mr Speaker, I am Katherine Rich. I am a 6th generation New Zealander of Scottish descent. My clan is Munro. My ancestors left London on The Mary, November 1848, and sailed into Port Chalmers, Dunedin, five months later. They were not landed gentry, just practical people seeking a better life for themselves and their children. They and other Scots brought with them influences that remain in our city today - a passion for education and religion, a hardy work ethic and a dour Presbyterian tone that gave plenty of scope for creative rebellion.*

She went on to link this background to her pro-business political stance.

Labour's Steve Chadwick spoke of having a 'Maori side' despite not having 'a drop of Maori blood in my veins'. Marriage to husband John, of Te Arawa, had opened 'the door to the Maori world' for her, meaning that she lived between the Pakeha and Maori world.

Personal relationships had brought cultures together for National's Lynda Scott too, persuading her that NZ should embrace global technology such as the internet:

> *My parents-in-law are English, my husband is a first generation New Zealander, my son's girlfriend is Chinese, my step-mother is Maori, my brother-in-law is Kenyan. My family is a global family living all over the world and they make me feel part of a global village.*

Family members were clearly an important influence for many of the women, sometimes just for the love and support they gave, but for others because of a direct link between their families' political beliefs and their own. Ann Hartley, for example, described her father and mother as 'passionate Labour Party workers and supporters', while Sue Bradford credited her father, Dick Mathews, 'one of our country's most respected biological scientists', with teaching her:

> *...a commonsense but profound love of the land and the sea around us, alongside instilling a lifelong loyalty to this country when the prizes of the outside world beckoned.*

(ii) Feminism as a guiding principle

Anne Tolley might have declared the doors of parliament now open to women, but clearly, the opening was wider for those belonging to some parties than others. After the 1999 election women made up 42% of all Green MPs; 40% of all Alliance MPs; 37.6% of all Labour MPs and 33% of all ACT MPs. But just 23% of all National MPs were women, and New Zealand First and United had no women MPs, new or sitting. In light of this, the references to gender and feminism in the speeches was interesting, with all of the Labour women making explicit references to women's issues. The most strongly worded, Margaret Wilson's, argued that 'women's struggle for equality…is far from over'. She identified violence against women, continuing disparity in rates of pay and opportunity for women, and barriers in women's access to justice as continuing to limit women's life chances – something she wanted to change. Interestingly, three out of four of the Labour women thanked other women for mentoring them, with Sonja Davies (former Labour MP and trade unionist) thanked by both Georgina Beyer and Winnie Laban.

The three National women took a different approach. Anne Tolley was the most explicit about gender issues, and her optimism about opportunities for women has already been noted. Katherine Rich opposed Labour's policy route to change, saying 'women of my generation…have so far to go to gain real equality and, like most examples of prejudice the solution is not in legislation but in changing attitudes.' Lynda Scott did not mention gender issues. None of the three mentioned having a woman mentor: Lynda Scott thanked Laurie Pickering, ex-MP in this light, while Katherine Rich said she would always value the advice of Sir Robin Gray. However, Katherine Rich also explicitly thanked her Divisional and Campaign Chairs, both of whom were women.

ACT's Penny Webster's feminism was one based on independence from the state.

While gender issues got no explicit mention in the speeches of the Green MPs, feminism was implicit in some comments. Sue Kedgley finished her speech by saying 'what a pleasure it is, having arrived at this male citadel, to see many strong and interesting women in this chamber and to note how much the face of Parliament has changed.' Sue Bradford, clearly under-awed by the formality of the occasion, called on other members of the House to make politics under MMP work:

> *Even at a simple level, do we have to continue with a process inside select committees which sees gentlemen of the right try to use my absence on a toilet break to subvert critical legislation…if these men had ever had to live with the consequences of bearing five children they might not be so quickly abusive of their power.*

(iii) Professional background

For many of the women Parliament was by no means their first experience of political life. Five out of the eleven (Georgina Beyer, Sue Kedgley, Steve Chadwick, Ann Hartley and Anne Tolley) had been involved with local government, two as mayors (Beyer and Hartley). Margaret Wilson was past President of the Labour Party, as well as an academic. Both Sue Bradford and Sue Kedgley had worked for many years as political activists in their respective fields (unemployed and beneficiaries rights and safe food). Lynda Scott had served as vice chair of the Marlborough health trust while Penny Webster, sharemilker, had been the first woman president of Auckland Federated Farmers and vice chairman of the dairy section of Federated Farmers. In addition, Steve Chadwick and Lynda Scott had between them covered either end of the life spectrum as medical professionals - Chadwick as a midwife and Lynda Scott as a geriatrician. Katherine Rich described herself as a business person who had known both success and failure.

(iv) Identification with a constituency

Of the eleven new women MPs four came in as electorate MPs: Georgina Beyer (Wairarapa), Steve Chadwick (Rotorua), Ann Hartley (Northcote) and Lynda Scott (Kaikoura). The other seven came in on their parties' list: Winnie Laban and Margaret Wilson from Labour, Anne Tolley and Katherine Rich from National, Penny Webster from Act, and Sue Bradford and Sue Kedgley from the Greens. With the exception of Steve Chadwick, each of the electorate MPs devoted a considerable amount of time identifying themselves with the delights and difficulties of their electorates. But three of the list MPs also clearly identified themselves with a geographic constituency. Katherine Rich, who stood unsuccessfully as a candidate for Dunedin North, was most explicit in this, saying:

> *I will work hard for Dunedin and I will hold the government to account. For each and every policy, regulation or law change - I will ask: 'What is the impact on Dunedin?' For every restructuring or government department change - I will ask: 'What is the impact on Dunedin?' I am not Dunedin's lone saviour who can turn the economic tide of the drift north. But I will do my best to guard our resources and play my part in representing our city.*

Similarly, Anne Tolley, unsuccessful candidate for Napier, identified herself with that city, with the Hawkes Bay region as a whole, and, more widely, with provincial New Zealanders:

> *Napier has not seen a National MP in residence for almost my entire lifetime. Sir Peter Tait last represented Napier in this house from 1951-1954. I was 1 when he stood down. I am delighted to bring, at last, another political view to my home town…I intend to ensure the gains my province has made over the last 9 years are not frittered away by Big City people with their hands in our provincial pockets. I come from Napier city. Take note, my voice is a voice from provincial New Zealand that knows well the pains, but also knows the gains.*

Margaret Wilson, paid tribute to, 'God's most beautiful waiting room', Tauranga and outlined some of the concerns expressed by the local communities there, but generalised these concerns out to the wider national constituency.

Others identified themselves with different types of constituencies. Winnie Laban, New Zealand's first woman Pacific Island MP, was quite specific about who she represented:

> *While I am in Parliament I will pursue a permanent interest in advocating and promoting the interests of women, Pacific people, Maori, the elderly, ethnic minorities, and all New Zealanders who are struggling to live a life of dignity…As a list member of Parliament I do not have a geographic constituency. The Pacific Island community*

is my constituency. Strengthening Pacific Island communities is my number 1 priority.

Sue Bradford identified herself with the unemployed and beneficiaries she had worked with for the previous 16 years:

I am here on a mission. Unemployed people and beneficiaries have had enough of being treated like dirt, taking the blame for every problem in society. Previous Governments have institutionalised another form of apartheid in Departments like WINZ, where a culture of contempt underlines dealings with so called customers as well as with hard pressed frontline staff. I am here to do everything I can to turn this around.

Penny Webster appealed to a rural constituency, peppering her speech with references to the 'joys of country life', praises for rural women who 'muck in and get on with what needs to be done' and noting the specific concerns of rural people. Lynda Scott identified with the elderly: 'My voice speaks for the older members of this country who I have worked for as a nurse and a doctor since the age of 17'. Georgina Beyer vowed to look at issues concerning the gay, lesbian and transgender communities in New Zealand. Steve Chadwick, member for Rotorua, reminded the House that 'as the MP for Rotorua, I represent and advocate for a large Maori population'.

(v) Political goals

Many of the political issues identified in the speeches were predictable enough, outlining the general ideological stance of the party to which the MPs belonged. The National MPs wanted to maintain the economic direction established by the previous National Government, Penny Webster wanted to apply it more rigorously, the Labour MPs wanted to balance it with social justice and a greater measure of economic equality, while the Greens wanted to abandon market liberalism altogether. Each of the MPs also had their own specific areas of interest – Margaret Wilson wanted constitutional change in line with the growing sense of cultural diversity, Ann Hartley stated a particular interest in community development and public transport, Georgina Beyer was concerned about rural depopulation and the decentralisation of health and education services, Winnie Laban about the needs of Pacific Islands people. Sue Kedgley and Sue Bradford articulated their already well-known opposition to, respectively, genetically modified foods and the World Trade Organisation. Sue Kedgely wanted to see more Maori representation in local government and a new charter for TVNZ. Penny Webster, on the other hand, wanted TVNZ sold off. Katherine Rich supported Alan Duff's books in homes scheme, increased investment in innovation research and development, free trade and the promotion of kiwi music. Anne Tolley was keen to encourage tourism and to develop exports of agriculture and horticulture.

Conclusion

Horn, Leniston and Lewis's 1983 article likened the maiden speech to 'a ship's first voyage…a traditional launching provided but once for each MP'[26]. Almost a year after their election into Parliament each of these newly elected women is by now well and truly launched, perhaps even storm-weary. But we shall have to wait some time yet to take full measure of each of these new women MPs, and when we do, we may refer back to their maiden speeches to remind us of where they came from and what it was that they had wanted to achieve while in parliament.

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[26] Horn, Leniston & Lewis, 1983, p.232.

Cutting the Numbers of MPs – What Would it Mean for Women?

By **Rae Nicholl,** School of Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington.

In the approach to New Zealand's 1999 general election, a Wellington woman, Margaret Robertson, organised a Citizens Initiated Referendum which was designed to reduce the size of the House of Representatives from 120 to 99 members.

One of the objections mentioned in the vigorous debate which took place prior to the election was the concern that, if the referendum result was favourable, the government might feel compelled to halve the number of *list* MPs. Based on the 1999 allocation of seats, the result of this could be that, at some future date, New Zealanders could be represented by 67 electorate and 32 list MPs.

Academics argued that a reduction in list seats could have serious consequences for women's representation. One of the reasons for the change from FPP to MMP in 1996 was that women would gain greater access to Parliament through the list component of the new electoral system. A reduction in the number of list MPs could mean that this advantage might be lost.

Is this a valid argument? Will women lose representation if the number of MPs is reduced and the list component halved? After two elections under a proportional representation system, the evidence is mixed. In the first MMP election in 1996, 25 (71.4 percent) of women MPs gained list seats while only 10 (28.6 percent) out of 35 women MPs were elected to constituencies. The party list result was of significant importance for women's representation.

Surprisingly, the 1999 election results were different. The number of women list MPs dropped from 25 in 1996 to 21 (56.8 percent) in 1999. On the other hand, the number of women constituency MPs increased, with 16 (43.2 percent) out of 37 women winning electorate seats, six more than in 1996 (see Table 1).

Table 1: NEW ZEALAND - Comparison between Women Electorate and List MPs 1993-1999.

1993		**1996**		**1999**	
FPP (Total: 99 electorate seats)		**MMP (Total: 120 seats)**		**MMP (Total: 120 seats)**	
Total No. of Women: 21	Women (%)	Total No. of Women: 35	Women (%)	Total No. of Women: 37	Women (%)
(Electorate seats: 99)		(Electorate seats: 65)		(Electorate seats: 67)	
21	21.2	10	28.6	16	43.2
-		(List seats: 55)		(List seats: 53)	
-	-	25	71.4	21	56.8

The differences between the number of women elected to constituency and list seats in the two elections can be explained by examining the political spectrum. Left-wing parties are more likely to award women candidates either safe or nearly-safe electorate seats. During a period of left-wing government, it could be expected that more women will hold electorate seats than during a period of right-wing dominance.

This was the case in 1999, when 14 women from left-wing parties held electorate seats compared to two constituency seats held by women from parties of the right. While women from right-wing parties did not hold more electorates than women from left-wing parties during a period of right-wing government from 1996 to 1999, the results were still significant, with women from right-wing parties holding four electorate seats, double the number they won in 1999, while women from the left-wing parties held six. In addition, women representing the centre parties held four list seats in 1996, when New Zealand First was in coalition with the National Party (see Table 2).

Table 2: NEW ZEALAND Electorate seats won by women shown along the left to right wing spectrum. Elections of 1996 and 1999

1996 National-NZ First Coalition National minority government						1999 Labour-Alliance Coalition						
Left		Centre		Right		Left			Centre		Right	
Lab	All	NZ First	Un	Nat	ACT	Lab	All	Gr-een	NZ First	Un	Nat	ACT
6	0	0	0	4	0	13	0	1	0	0	2	0
6		**0**		**4**		**14**			**0**		**2**	

What happens when the same formula is applied to women list MPs? During a period of left-wing government, women in parties of the right become more reliant on the list to gain entry to Parliament. On one hand, 10 women from right-wing parties became list MPs in 1999 compared to two women winning electorate seats. The centre parties failed to elect any women to Parliament in 1999. On the other hand, women from the three left-wing parties won 11 list seats, as compared to 14 constituency seats (see Table 3).

Table 3: NEW ZEALAND - List seats won by women shown along the left to right wing spectrum. Elections of 1996 and 1999

1996 National-NZ First Coalition National Minority Government						1999 Labour-Alliance Coalition						
Left		Centre		Right		Left			Centre		Right	
Lab	All	NZ First	Un	Nat	ACT	Lab	All	Gr-een	NZ First	Un	Nat	ACT
7	7	4	0	4	3	5	4	2	0	0	7	3
14		**4**		**7**		**11**			**0**		**10**	

The Citizens Initiated Referendum to restrict the number of MPs in Parliament to 99 received overwhelming approval. The number of people voting yes was 1,681,038, while those against amounted to only 382,245, with 17,448 informal votes being cast.

Should the referendum results be acted on and the number of list MPs reduced, it seems that the effect on women candidates could be erratic. If women electorate candidates are from winning left-wing parties, they will have a much better chance of being elected than if they are constituency candidates representing right-wing parties.

Obversely, the outcome for women candidates from right-wing parties could be quite severe because, when they are on the losing side, they do not win many electorate seats but mainly gain entry to Parliament through the list. In fact, in that instance, the disadvantaged position of right-wing women candidates could be exacerbated by the reluctance of their parties to choose them as candidates for safe or fairly-safe constituencies.

The conclusion can be drawn that the *list* component is more important for giving women from right-wing parties a place in the New Zealand Parliament than women from left-wing parties: this may be especially significant when a left-wing coalition wins an election.

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The International Political Science Association Triennial Congress, 1-5 August 2000:
World Capitalism, Governance and Community: Towards a Corporate Millennium?

By **Jean Drage** and **Elizabeth McLeay**, School of Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington

A handful of New Zealanders attended this jamboree of political scientists. Apart from the glories of summertime Quebec City (the architecture, the views, the food) the international nature and atmosphere of the congress was what made the event worthwhile, for it certainly could not be described as well-organised or participant-friendly. The success of the sessions very much depended on the organisational skills, energy and perseverance of the convenors of the many panels. (The strength of IPSA is its registered research Committees). The most striking evidence of the lack of planning and information was for us to discover too late that there was a special day-long workshop, just prior to the formal start of the conference, on the topic: 'Women and Politics at the Millenium'. This had been arranged by the IPSA Research Committee on Sex Roles and Politics and included panels on such issues as women and representation, women, globalisation and NGOs, and women's participation in top decision-making positions: a comparative study of 27 industrial countries. (Jenny Neale from Victoria University of Wellington has contributed to the latter study, although she could not be present at the Congress.)

There was a huge choice of sessions from which to choose; and the actual selection was constricted by the practice of having three-to-four long sessions a day (with no lunch-break). The strategy we adopted was to specialise. Jean attended the sessions on comparative studies on local government and politics and women's representation in politics. Elizabeth focused mainly on two series of sessions: legislative studies; and comparative representation and electoral reform. Within the former group, there were good sessions on strategies for increasing the number of women politicians and other political empowerment measures. There were a couple of interesting papers on women and politics in the latter sessions: Wilma Rule (University of Nevada), 'Patterns of Women's Parliamentary Representation'; and Richard Vengroff (University of Connecticut), 'The Impact of Local Level Electoral Systems on Gender Representation'. Some paper-givers on political representation included the gender dimension, although most did not.

Since our return from Quebec, Volume 24, No. 2 of *Participation*, IPSA's official bulletin, has been published. It contains a feature article by Michelle Murphy, 'Participation of Women at IPSA World Congresses', pp. 4-6. Since 1997, IPSA has tried to involve women, and there has been a slow rise in women participants. The involvement of women in IPSA executive and other activities is generally lower than the 20% of IPSA members who are women. The author notes, however, that the political science academic labour force continues to be disproportionately male. At Quebec (as far as the researcher could tell) 20.1% of paper-givers and 20.0% of discussants were women. Of the panel convenors, 19.6% were women, as were 25.2% of chairpersons, although the proportion of chairpersons rose to 65.8% in sessions organised by women. Murphy notes that, 'The proportions of female paper givers and discussants in panels organised by women were 44.5% and 46.6% respectively, and this could indicate a lack of suitable female participants or a more even-handed approach by female chairpersons in organising their panels' (p.5). Note that in panels dealing with women's status, 86.0% of paper givers and 83.3% of discussants were women.

In short, the Congress showed that although there are still too few women political scientists internationally, women are active in proportion to their numbers. Moreover, women play a key role in encouraging other women to participate fully in conferences such as IPSA. Our impression was that the gender dimension is indeed an increasingly important aspect of political science, but there is a long way to go before women and politics, apart from being a specialist area in its own right, occupies its rightful place in 'mainline' political analysis.

For those who are interested, the IPSA Homepage is at:
http://www.ucd.ie/~ipsa/index.html

Can Ladies Work Here Too Nanna? Gender and Australasian Politics Textbooks

By **Janice Dudley**, School of Politics and International Studies, Murdoch University, Western Australia and **Sonia Palmieri**, University of Queensland, 1999.

This article was prepared for the Australasian Political Studies Association Women's Caucus. It has been considerably condensed and edited by Jean Drage with the authors' permission. The full paper is on APSA's website.
http://www.une.edu.au/apsa/wapsa_text_books.htm

In 1992 whilst in Canberra for the Australian Political Science Association conference (APSA) Janice Dudley visited the new Federal Parliament House. During her tour she overheard a small boy who had noticed, perceptively, that Joan Child, a former Speaker of the House of Representatives, was a woman! He turned to his grandmother and asked her in amazement 'Can Ladies work here too Nanna?' As Dudley says 'It was not an unreasonable question. What he had seen in that building had not provided him with the evidence that ladies - women - could work there. He was perhaps 7 or 8 years old, so he will now be mid way through secondary school. It is to be hoped that when he attends university in another couple of years' time, the introductory politics texts he is assigned will acknowledge (at the very least) that women are significant and mainstream participants in the politics of both Australia and New Zealand, and will provide him with the evidence of this fact.'

In 1981, APSA had adopted the policy 'That the study of women be incorporated into all politics courses'. In 1984, Gillian O'Loghlin, as APSA Secretary, undertook the first review of the implementation of this policy. Departmental heads were asked to report back on curriculum changes.[27] Subsequent reviews have focused on widely used first-year textbooks. Merle Thornton conducted the first such review in 1986.[28] She found that despite the endeavours of feminist scholars, (including the recent appearance of many articles and books on the place of women in Australian political life), past and present students beginning the study of politics via the study of the Australian political system will find little or nothing in their text books about the pivotal role of women and of familial relationships in the politics of Australia.

It seemed fairly discouraging news. Five years later, a second review was conducted by Felicity Grace, Barbara Sullivan and Gillian Whitehouse who reviewed texts published since Merle Thornton's 1986 review. Their intention was also to develop the concept of an 'integrated political science' - a politics, that is, where the 'specific situation of women and the importance of gender issues more generally in the construction of political life' were heeded. They concluded:

> *...introductory textbooks in Australian government published during the last five years have contributed little towards making women more visible in the analysis of Australian politics, and almost nothing towards the inclusion of feminist scholarship in Australian political science. We can only hope that a follow up review of this nature five years from now will reveal a significant advancement.*[29]

In 1995 the Women's Caucus of APSA resolved to review, once again, introductory politics texts. Elizabeth Harman and Janice Dudley undertook the project and members of the Women's Caucus from both Australia and New Zealand provided reviews of the twelve texts identified as those most commonly used in the teaching of introductory Australasian politics and government. These reviews form the basis of this paper.

The review looks at the manner and extent to which women are being incorporated into mainstream political science teaching in Australasian universities. Firstly it examines what the authors of these texts have included in their overviews of Australasian politics with respect to women, gender and feminist political science scholarship. Secondly, it considers the ways in which these topics are covered throughout the texts, discussing the appropriateness of the language or imagery being used, the accuracy of the facts presented vis-a-vis women, and the literature being used to inform the texts, concluding that, in essence, these readers deal with women in a descriptive rather than an analytical fashion. Lastly, the paper considers the implications of women's

[27] APSA Newsletter, May 1984.
[28] Merle Thornton, 'Written out of Politics: Neglect of Gender in Introductory Texts in Australian Politics', APSA Newsletter, September 1986.
[29] Felicity Grace, Barbara Sullivan and Gillian Whitehouse, 'Written out of Politics: Gender and Australian Politics Textbooks', APSA Newsletter, May 1991.

non-inclusion for the critical teaching of Australasian politics.

In our view, and in the view of our reviewers, most of the introductory texts for Australian and New Zealand politics either ignore women, or 'ghetto-ise' women's issues or women's participation in politics into a separate chapter with the 'real' politics remaining unscathed. Feminist political thought and feminist scholarship more broadly, with some honourable exceptions, are ignored. If the analogy of cooking can be used, women are often an ingredient to be added, but rarely stirred.

Sadly, in 1999, little has changed regarding the significance ascribed to women in Australasian first year Politics textbooks. Whilst there have been new editions of some texts, and some of these are better in detail than the earlier editions (particularly Lovell et al.), our criticisms of the 'add women and stir' approach, of the failure to include women as mainstream players in Australasian politics, and of the failure to take feminist theorising seriously, remain. Thus, unfortunately, if the present rate of progress is maintained, it is more than likely that when the young boy whom Janice Dudley overheard at Parliament House enrols for Politics I at university, he will still be learning that politics is principally a man's world.

Research

In 1996 all Australian and New Zealand universities were asked to provide data on the texts they used for teaching introductory Australian and New Zealand politics. Twenty-one Australian and three New Zealand institutions provided information on their most commonly used texts. Table One details the popularity of each text. Included also is Dean Jaensch's *Parliament, Parties & People: Australian Politics Today* (1994) because it is a widely used text in the upper secondary school study of Politics and many students studying introductory Politics at university level continue to use it as their primary source of information.

Table One: Texts most commonly used in Australian and New Zealand politics courses.

A. Parkin, J. Summers and D. Woodward *Australian Government, Politics, Power and Policy*, 5th edition, Longman Cheshire 1994	10
D. Lovell, I. McAllister, W. Maley and C. Kukathas, *The Australian Political System*, Longman Cheshire 1995	8
H. Emy, and O. Hughes, *Australian Politics: Realities in Conflict*, 2nd edition, Macmillan 1991	7
G. Davies, J. Wanna, J. Warhurst and P. Weller, *Public Policy in Australia,* 2nd edition, Allen and Unwin, 1992	6
D. Jaensch, *Power Politics: Australia's Party System,* 3rd edition, Allen and Unwin, 1994	4
R. Stewart and I. Ward, *Politics One* 2nd edition, Macmillan 1996	4
R. Smith (ed.), *Politics in Australia*, 3rd edition, Allen and Unwin, 1997	4
G. Maddox, *Australian Democracy in Theory and Practice,* Longman Cheshire, 3rd edition, 1995	3
D. Jaensch, *The Politics of Australia*, Macmillan, 1992	3
H. Gold (ed.), *New Zealand Politics in Perspective*, 3rd edition, 1992	3
R. Mulgan, *Politics in New Zealand*, 1994	3

Note: The total of institutions is greater than the 24 institutions which responded to the survey, because several institutions assign or recommend more than one text

Whither the Concept of Gender?

These texts reveal four main findings:

1. Gender is often referred to in terms of a 'gender gap' in electoral behaviour;
2. Women are mentioned across an interesting range of discussion points, but only sparingly;
3. Whilst good material may be included, more often feminist theory is conspicuous by its absence; and
4. There is an almost systematic aversion in these textbooks to the role and position of women in the political institutions of Australia and New Zealand.

The ill-defined concept of gender is most commonly treated in first year university politics text books as a quantitative variable with which to analyse electoral behaviour. Parkin et al. (1994) use gender to demonstrate a difference between men and women's levels of political trust and efficacy, and political participation. According to these authors, ‘men are more likely to have engaged in these [loosely defined, political] activities than women’ (p. 204). Whilst

Lovell et al. (1995) use similar methodology, they maintain, conversely, that in terms of voting patterns, women have become more like men. As well, Stewart and Ward's (1996) text has only a very short reference to gender as a voting variable. Jaensch (1994b) also mentions the gender gap in party support.

Some authors have not, however, followed the statistical gender gap trend. Davies et al. (1993) declare that 'gender balance has never been regarded as crucial by the party caucuses and machines'. This is used to explain the paucity of women elected to the Australian parliament and the Ministry, as of 1992. More effectively, Smith (1997) dedicates an entire chapter to gender and patriarchy where Vanessa Farrer discusses both the realities of Australian women's social and political experience, and feminist theories, including post-modern perspectives. Thirdly, Mulgan's (1994) chapter on the composition of New Zealand society includes gender as a distinctive and significant cleavage. Additionally, this section on gender incorporates competing feminist perspectives and references to women's issues and their political interests. Where gender is not mentioned, it is either ignored altogether (Jaensch 1992, 1994a, Gold 1992), or alluded to briefly in terms of the existence of 'gender inequality'.

Women, per se, are in fact incorporated across a whole range of different reference points in the textbooks reviewed. Sadly, this 'incorporation' is most notable by its brevity. Women are discussed, to a varying extent, in relation to the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) (Davies et al. 1992, Lovell et al. 1995, Stewart and Ward 1996, Maddox 1995, Jaensch 1992, 1994b), the women's movement (Stewart and Ward 1996, Jaensch 1994b), interest or pressure group politics (Davies et al. 1992, Maddox 1995, Gold 1992), their being voters (Emy and Hughes 1991, Gold 1992), political parties (Parkin et al. 1994, Stewart and Ward 1996, Maddox 1995, Gold 1992), the number of women in Parliament (Parkin et al. 1994, Stewart and Ward 1996, Jaensch 1992, Gold 1992, Smith 1997), the femocracy (Davies et al. 1992, Maddox 1995, Smith 1997), their patterns of work (Mulgan 1994, Jaensch 1992), women's issues and interests (Mulgan 1994), and their exclusion from politics and power (Smith 1997). It is noteworthy that none of the authors cover all of these points - only ever a combination of them. Significantly, the extent to which these points are covered varies considerably. At one extreme, Jaensch (1994a) appears to make not even a token attempt to address many of these issues. In Lovell et al.'s (1995) compilation, women make only fleeting appearances - and moreover, in articles written by other authors and added to the text. At the centre point of the spectrum, women have been subjected to the 'highlighted box' syndrome. Stewart and Ward (1996) dedicate one and three quarter pages to such boxes to address the topic of women and the ALP, the Liberals, and the Australian Democrats respectively. Jaensch (1992) presents statistics on the numbers of women in employment, politics and the public service in boxes, whilst Gold (1992) simply demonstrates the increased presence of women in party hierarchies by statistics. Of the more extensive(although by no means comprehensive) coverage of women made in this selection of text books, Davies et al.'s second edition provides a good example of the 'add women' formula in their discussion of the public sector and policy. Whilst tantalisingly short, there is, for instance, some consideration of the manner in which policy carries the imprint of contradictory influences by and for women (pp. 107-108).

Feminist theory is notable more for its absence rather than its inclusion, let alone application. Where it is discussed, it is in reference to conceptions of citizenship (Emy and Hughes 1991), political power (Parkin et al. 1994, Maddox 1995), patriarchy (Smith 1997) and theories of structural dominance (Mulgan 1994).

The most remarkable finding concerning the general 'location' of women in these text books, however, is that women are most often completely omitted from discussions of the political institutions of Australia and New Zealand. That is, women's engagement with, or non-inclusion in, processes and institutions such as the nature of responsible government, federalism, the constitution, the Cabinet and/or Ministry, the senior echelons of the Public Service, and the High Court is not considered to be a subject for serious consideration in first year university political science text books. Furthermore, women are notably absent from discussions of economic structures and problems. Women and the 'real world' of politics it seems, do not make for a well-blended recipe.

Well Incorporated or Simply Added?

Where authors have included women in their accounts of Australasian politics, the question of how deserves some attention. It appears that women do epitomise the extra ingredient of political science scholarship. When women do rate a mention in these texts, the accounts are often marginalised in a separate chapter. As well, the literature used in these texts of women's political activity and presence is outdated or simply not appropriate. This, among other things, leads to the more worrying trend prevalent in some of these books of inadequately representing the women's cause.

The Incorporation of Inaccurate Information

What is perhaps more disturbing about certain authors' incorporation of women into their first year political science texts is that on occasion the authors do not present the realities of women's political involvement accurately. In particular, they do not discuss the contextual factors which explain certain facts about women's ability to participate equally in politics. In some cases, students are simply reading what is not true.

Parkin et al. (1994), for example, state that the adoption of gender issues by the ALP is attributable to the growth of new politics, with little further comment. No mention is made of the feminist pressure within the party which resulted in both the development of comprehensive women's policies and the increase in women's preselection in winnable seats during the 1980s. Another instance of these authors' lack of regard for context is in detailing the fact that there is a greater proportion of women in the Australian Senate. No mention is made of the system of proportional representation which has generally favoured women's representation.

Particularly troublesome, however, are statements such as the following made by Stewart and Ward (1996):

> '*In Australia the challenge to patriarchal politics mounted by the women's movement has been marginalised and labelled as radical feminism ... Radical feminists favour autonomous, non-hierarchical collectivities. Their views may have had broad social impact but they have made little impact on mainstream politics.'*(p. 185)

If the 'challenge to patriarchal politics' were indeed only mounted by radical feminists, how do Stewart and Ward account for the ever increasing numbers of women in Parliament and indeed, the rise of the femocrats? Feminists of diverse backgrounds have individually (and in some cases collectively) had great impact on mainstream politics, and it is a great shame that these authors have not recognised this.

Perhaps more disturbing however, is the depiction of Ros Kelly standing behind the then Prime Minister (Keating) with an aggressive look on her face, obviously addressing the Opposition under the bold caption of 'SHAMEFUL BEHAVIOUR IN PARLIAMENT'. The decision to include a picture of a female member to show 'shameful behaviour' in Parliament, when they only represent 22.3 percent of the House of Representatives (and even fewer at the time Ms Kelly was in Parliament) and are generally accepted to behave less shamefully than their male colleagues is, at best, disappointing.

Feminism Taken Seriously?

The fundamental problem is that too many authors do not fully engage with the 'provocation' that feminism often represents. For example, in Mulgan's text (1994) he depicts feminism through a simplistic view of society in which there is a rigid, narrow focus on the struggle between men and women. For Mulgan feminism is too radical and utopian, and possibly dangerous. The book concludes:

> '*Those who think that radical transformation provides the only hope of improvement, not those who work for modest and incremental reforms, are in effect the strongest ideological allies of the rich and powerful. By concentrating on the impossible they help to impede the possible.'* (p. 308).

This rather outdated perception of feminism obscures the changing dynamics of feminist theory and practice and confirms popular (media) misconceptions of feminism. Alternatively, several authors (including Lovell et al.) espouse Inglehart's 'post materialist values' thesis, resulting in the women's movement and feminism being presented dismissively as 'lifestyle issues' and 'lifestyle choices' resulting from the rise in post materialist values.

There are some writers - sadly the minority - who do take feminist thought seriously. Under the heading of political theory, Maddox (1996) discusses feminist political theory, with specific reference to the notion that 'the personal is political' and he considers the challenge this

presents to liberalism. It is of course very difficult to reconcile the two positions, and as Maddox himself points out, '... the liberal democrat would want to preserve a conceptual separation between the public and private spheres, since the intrusion of the state into all aspects of our private lives would be unthinkable.' Whilst Maddox rejects the feminist definition of politics he does acknowledge that feminist theory provides a distinct approach for the study of politics.

Conclusion

These texts are those which most introductory Politics students are exposed to and hence those which might arguably be considered the most influential. They fall into three groups which could be described broadly as 'good in parts', 'needing to be supplemented by appropriate readings' and 'to be avoided'. The first group, which includes Emy and Hughes (1991), Maddox (1996), Mulgan (1994), Parkin et al. (1994), and Smith (1997) are texts which engage with feminist theory even if it tends to be ghetto-ised into separate chapters. The second group, which consists of Davies et al. (1993) and Stewart and Ward (1996), use conventional institutional analysis to consider women's participation in politics and hence tend to construct the political activity of women principally in terms of interest group activity. The third group, Lovell et al. (1995) and the three texts by Jaensch, either ignore or actively exclude women as mainstream players in Australian political life.

What is most disturbing is that almost without exceptions these texts demonstrate a stubborn resistance to considering gender to be a substantive issue in Australian politics and as equally constitutive of politics as the so-called 'mainstream' issues. In addition, feminist analysis cannot be considered an 'optional extra'. A 'feminism chapter', whilst better than nothing, does not absolve the authors of what purport to be comprehensive introductory politics texts, of their responsibilities to engage with the substantial body of feminist thought. Without the inclusion of the critical analytical insights of feminism, any analysis of Australian political life can only be partial, limited and hence flawed.

We are not arguing for a model of teaching introductory politics that is reductive to 'women's issues'. Rather, we challenge the assumption that existing texts are neutral with respect to gender. These introductory texts are gendered in that they are masculinist, the male is the norm. Thus these texts are reductionist with respect to gender. Australian politics is gendered - it is masculinist, the male is norm. Most of these texts do little to question this state of affairs.

The Way Forward?

Is the best we can say of these textbooks that some of them have 'added women' more comprehensively than others? That improvement in the treatment of gender can be measured merely by the inclusion of more index references in subsequent editions of offending texts? We think not. Our disillusionment with the current crop of Australian first year textbooks reflects a deeper dissatisfaction with the conventional approaches to teaching Australian politics as exemplified by most of these books: their approaches to gender and women are merely indicative of greater problems in the structure and content of the typical first year curriculum.

We need therefore to consider what we believe the roles of both first year Politics and introductory Politics texts to be. We would suggest that they are to introduce students to the substantive content of Australasian politics, in order to provide them with opportunities to evaluate institutions, practices and theories critically. In addition, we should be supporting students in analysing current political issues using the tools of theory. If therefore, a University education is about assisting students to develop their skills of critical analysis, then it is reasonable to expect that texts should engage critically with existing institutions and practices. Thus we believe that Australasian political textbooks need to do more than merely parallel the gendered character of Australasian politics. We believe that Australasian political texts which employ the insights of theory - including feminism - are needed if Australasian political practices and institutions are to be subjected to critical analysis.

There is a number of ways of incorporating gender into first year teaching which moves beyond treating gender as a tutorial topic or textbook chapter. One way is to adopt the approach used by feminist historians who challenge the conventional male-centred, public sphere-oriented periodisation of history. A similar strategy in Australasian politics might reproblematise Australasian institutions in a way that makes power relations - and therefore issues

of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality - central to their description and analysis. An approach along these lines might deal with the institutions of the Australian Federation settlement, citizenship, post-war reconstruction, republicanism, and the welfare state. There is no shortage of material to support the approach of examining the changing nature and meaning of Australian political values and shifting power relationships -- examples would include work such as that by Peter Beilharz, Helen Irving (for example, 1996, 1997, 1999) Sheila Shaver and van Acker (for example, 1999).[30]

The particular policy domain of welfare is illustrative - it is impossible (or at least absurd) to talk about the rise and decline of Australasian welfare states in a non-gendered way. One need only consider how the welfare state replaced or at least gave public support to the private sphere of women in their domestic roles of rearing and teaching children, caring for the sick and invalid and aged, and providing the means to existence through gardening and animal husbandry (sic) - always useful when the male earner was thrown out of work. Not to mention the impact the expansion of the welfare state had in terms of white collar employment opportunities for women. Nor the centrality of welfare support for the clients of the welfare state, especially single mothers and impoverished widows. And finally, the gendered implications of the dismantling of the welfare state in Australasia (see for example, Shaver, 1998, O'Connor et al., 1999)[31]. This is not to say of course, that we should be not be introducing students to the Constitution, the High Court, responsible government, federalism, parliament, the bureaucracy and political parties. These are the basic building blocks of the Australian political system. But unless we as teachers or as writers of textbooks begin to ask ourselves - and more importantly, our students - some fundamental questions about the underlying power relations that created, shaped and reshape these institutions, we are unlikely to make much progress on dealing with issues of inclusion and exclusion in Australian politics. Or is it just too 'political' to ask how our political institutions came to be, whom they benefit, and how they change?

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[30] H. Irving (ed), *A Woman's Constitution?: Gender and History in the Australian Commonwealth*, Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1996; H. Irving, *To Constitute a Nation: A Cultural History of Australia's Constitution,* Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1997; H. Irving,, *A Centenary Companion to Australian Federation,* Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1999; S. Shaver, *Extension Amidst Retrenchment: Gender and Welfare State Restructuring in Australia and Sweden,* Sydney, Social Policy research Centre, 1998; E. van Acker, *Different Voices: Gender and Politics in Australia* ,Melbourne, Macmillian, 1999.

[31] J. O'Connor, A. Orloff, & S. Shaver, *States, Markets, Families: Gender, Liberalism and Social Policy in Australia, Canada, Great Britain and the United States,* Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1999.