

**“Diversity in Political Science: Why it Matters and How to Get it”**

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**Introduction**

Why does diversity in political science matter? What persistent obstacles impede the diversification of the profession? And how might political scientists overcome these obstacles? This set of contributions to *PGI* offers fresh ways of thinking about, and tackling, these questions by inviting colleagues to apply their research expertise in political science to the discipline and academe.

The articles making up the symposium respond to a stubborn reality: slow progress in diversifying political science faculty at all ranks and in redressing bias in the discipline. In 1980, female faculty comprised an estimated 10.3% of political science faculty nationwide. By 2010, that share had increased only to 28.6%, despite record numbers of women earning advanced degrees in political science (APSA 2011, 41-43; Hesli, Lee and Mitchell 2012). Female faculty of color remain severely underrepresented. In 2010 African American women constituted a mere 1.7% of political science faculty (APSA 2011, 41, 42). As a result, many undergraduates complete their degrees without having ever taken a course taught by a woman of color (cf. Evans 2007).

Moreover, we know that marginalized groups often encounter a difficult environment and obstacles to career advancement in political science and elsewhere in academe (e.g., Anonymous and Anonymous 1999; Hesli, Fink, and Duffy 2003b; Van Assendelft 2003; but see Ginther 2004). Implicit bias, “old boys” networks, and skewed hiring, promotion, and tenure practices have contributed to these problems (e.g.,

Lavariega Monforti and Michelson 2008; Mathews and Andersen 2001; Williams, Alon, and Bornstein 2006; Wolfinger, Mason, and Goulden 2008). Strategies for combating discrimination in academe and in the workplace more broadly have emphasized mentoring, building leadership skills, and encouraging the marginalized to adapt to the status quo (e.g., Hesli, Fink, and Duffy 2003a; Monroe, Ozyurt, Wrigley, and Alexander 2008; Sandberg 2013). Despite these strategies, political science remains largely the domain of white men.

This dominance likely undermines the discipline's goal of advancing knowledge. Recent research indicates that diversity matters for corporations, for academe, and for political science. Social scientists document that diverse personnel lead to better outcomes, such as more effective problem solving, more productivity, increased profits, and higher rankings (Henderson and Herring 2013; Herring 2009; Page 2007). Problem solving and productivity are central to advancing intellectual inquiry in political science, and to the extent that high rankings help departments and universities recruit and retain outstanding faculty and students, they contribute to the general aim of enhancing knowledge.

Recent research into gendered citation patterns in international relations journals, moreover, shows that research produced by women is read and cited less often than is research by men, which means that this research is "systematically undervalued" (Maliniak, Powers, and Walter 2013, 31). Because scholars tend to cite those of the same sex, Maliniak et al. argue that greater diversity will foster more rapid intellectual development in the subfield, and will yield research that investigates a wider array of questions and that attains greater methodological innovation. Political theory adds the

normative argument that diversity and inclusive institutional practices are not only instrumentally advantageous but also necessary as a matter of justice.

The contributions to this symposium shed new light on the importance of diversity in political science, identify the persistent obstacles to diversity in the discipline, and also develop strategies for diversifying the profession. They arrive at their conclusions by applying disciplinary insights to academe and our own field. As a result, the contributors demonstrate that our disciplinary knowledge can be applied to a wider range of institutions and contexts than is often assumed. By drawing on their expertise in survey analysis, genealogical analysis, gender equity, and intersectionality, each contributor assesses the status of and obstacles to diversity in political science. Together, all contributors show how we can construct a more equitable future for the discipline and academe.

Relying on data from a 2009 APSA-sponsored survey on the attitudes and experiences of political science faculty, Vicki Hesli Claypool appraises whether and under what conditions greater diversity in our departments is associated with higher levels of collegiality and productivity. The survey furnishes groundbreaking data on the extent, nature, and effects of diversity in our discipline, while underscoring that the limited number of diverse political science faculty hinders our ability to assess their effects quantitatively. For example, precisely because of the paucity of African-American women in the discipline, Claypool cannot analyze separately the attitudes of members of this subgroup.

Claypool's investigation of diversity outcomes is complemented by the next two contributions, which focus on obstacles to diversity. Paula McClain and co-authors

Gloria Ayee, Taneisha Means, Alicia Reyes-Barrientez, and Nura Sedique apply the tools of genealogical analysis and path dependency to political science, and argue that the discipline's power relations and institutional legacy marginalize research about race. The authors suggest that before we can devise strategies for counteracting this legacy we must first recognize it and understand how and why it persists. The fact that the authors span cohorts—a senior scholar and several junior ones—reinforces the contemporary implications of the discipline's past. The problems rooted in the past continue to reverberate, leading scholars across cohorts to grapple with the same marginalization of their scholarship.

Lynne Ford speaks to ambitious women scholars who, as she reveals, continue to face serious structural barriers to their attainment of, and exercise of power in, leadership positions. Ford itemizes these barriers, explains how and why they persist, and observes the pervasive failure of universities to dismantle these barriers. She then turns to the gender equity and academic leadership literatures to highlight three career strategies that might guide individual women who, in this hostile climate, aim to climb the academic administrative ladder and advance institutional change: social efficacy, social modeling and mentoring.

Finally, building on the theme of leadership at the heart of Ford's contribution, Wendy Smooth applies the logic of intersectionality to identify faculty situated at the intersection of multiple inequalities as capable of spearheading the creation of new, intersectional leadership norms and alliances in academe. She thus invites those at the margins to draw on their lived experience to expand the strategies that diversity advocates might adopt.

All of the contributors thus employ their specific research expertise in political science to enhance our understanding of diversity in the discipline. We learn that increased diversity in political science brings complex effects that are mediated by a range of factors including academic rank, and that we must grapple with the fraught legacies of our discipline, and of academe more broadly, which perpetuate elite male dominance. Absent institutional transformation, women who have honed their leadership skills to acquire power bear the burden of spearheading reform. Such women, along with women aspiring to positions of power, will thus need to pursue the strategies articulated here to forge new, intersectional coalitions that challenge the structural obstacles to diversity in academe.

The contributors to this symposium seek to inspire all scholars, including privileged men, to reflect on how their areas of research expertise, joined to their broader disciplinary training and their knowledge of the political arena, might spur new strategies for diversifying political science, the academy, and the workplace. Privileged men have a particular responsibility to craft, implement, and collaborate on new strategies, precisely because of their privilege.

We also believe that innovative collaborations beyond our discipline are essential for generating new strategies to advance diversity at work, and that these collaborations have the potential to enrich political science inquiry by helping us address questions that, as yet, we have failed to answer. For instance, what lessons might our research on marginalized groups in political contexts yield for scholars in business schools studying diversity in corporations? And since departments are workplaces, how might the insights of business school scholars inform our strategies for changing political science

departments (e.g., Davidson 2011)? Or what lessons might we offer to, and gain from, cognitive psychologists whose research probes the conditions under which the experience of diversity is most likely to generate flexible thinking and creativity (e.g., Crisp and Turner 2011)? As these examples illustrate, our collaborative work with scholars in other fields promises to generate fresh questions and answers about issues at the core of our discipline: inequality, individual and group behavior, power, (in)justice, institutions, and institutional reform.

This symposium spearheads the application of political science research to academe. It also contributes to what we hope will become an ongoing conversation within and across disciplines about how to make the workplace a more equitable and intellectually exciting place for us all. In promoting the application of political science knowledge and tools beyond the political arena, this Dialogues symposium traverses subfield and disciplinary boundaries and engages in the “border crossing” that distinguishes *PGI* (Bowler et al. 2013, 2).

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