

On Political Science, Law and Courts, Women and Making Some (Cyber)Noise

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Look, I don't want to wax philosophic, but I will say that if you're alive you've got to flap your arms and legs, you've got to jump around a lot, for life is the very opposite of death, and therefore you must at very least think noisy and colorfully, or you're not alive.

-----Mel Brooks

I'm torn between two points in thinking about advancing women in political science. One is that we need to help each other make noise; if we want to contribute to knowledge and get it acknowledged, we need to share the good news. Every day, the importance of that point presses home: on January 3 the *New York Times* published an opinion piece by a genomics doctoral student who felt free to explain that women disagree about abortion, without engaging any of the excellent feminist social science on the issue (Khan, 2015).

The other point about the way we need to flap our arms and legs is from the Grinch's grumbling about the Whos' celebration of Christmas: all the noise, noise, noise, noise. The advantages to noise and self-promotion are ever more evident in blogs, podcasts, and Facebook. We don't celebrate reading or listening or learning from everything that everyone produces. As a recent podcast of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation show Spark noted, we measure hits on webpages, not whether people read, nor how long they spent on the webpage, nor whether anyone learned anything. When people have tried to figure it out, it looks like people don't read very deeply into articles (Episode 270). Success is a matter of developing social networks, specializing and producing. In the increasing focus on readily available metrics, there has been very little attention to the downsides of the focus on producing, or on the heterogeneity of what doing one's job well requires. Not only is there the downside of the lack of downtime, which Americans are often unwilling to treat as a downside and instead brag about. Downside also includes the pressure not to conduct research ethically, as a recent scandal concerning a field experiment in political science demonstrated (Willis, 2014), and the repeated research misconduct that has been exposed in psychology in recent years. If you measure productivity, what you will get is productivity, not attention to students or ethical conduct or transformations in teaching or community connection. Yet we increasingly ask for ethical conduct, decent (and legal) treatment of students and colleagues, increased community connections, and interdisciplinary scholarship.

While hesitant about producing more noise together, in this paper I'll think about how we can be noisy in a way that benefits the profession, our students, our communities, and us. This paper will focus on building coalitions through affinity groups, and extending networks electronically. Along the way it will draw upon what we know about the significance of social networks, specialization and recognition in other disciplines.

Networks, Gender and Connecting Women

The articles published in September in *Politics and Gender* from the previous workshop on gender and the political science profession inspire. In it, Brooke Ackerly (2014) argued we need to rely upon our networks, illustrating what that can accomplish through a story from her field research. She explains how she was able to get out of Bangladesh to see her family over the holidays, despite having lost her passport. Her dramatic story includes representatives from the US embassy and a Bangladeshi immigration worker, and she deftly captures the nuances of asserting power and expressing gratitude in different mixes before those who could help her leave. She acknowledges the complexity of being American in Bangladesh. She could not have gotten the help she did without already having built her network through her research and her service in the country as a Fulbright scholar. Ackerly argues that by expanding our network we can contribute to the promotion of women in political science.

Ackerly tells her story well. She invested in her personal networks through kindness and generosity and her research, and people in return helped her. We need 'people with different capacities and privileges [and] context-appropriate skills.' Ackerly's story brings to life how much our networks can feel so personal, and difficult to transfer: they require care and time.

To use the language of social capital, links between people can be bonding, bridging and linking. Bonding networks bring like people in similar circumstances together. Bridging networks are looser ties of similar people, which in our circumstances could mean across institutions or subfields. Linking networks tie people together in dissimilar situations. As Ackerly's (2014) article demonstrates, what counts as a distant tie or a dissimilar situation can change, as an immigration official for Bangladesh becomes someone who is sympathetic because he too has had problems with passports. The idea is useful in the legal mobilization literature concerning law and social movements: allies in state agencies or professional associations have access to resources that social movement groups may not, and can help with organizing (Kenney, 2013). They can bring expertise or access to publicity or inside knowledge. Extending networks gives us more people we can rely upon to write for promotion and tenure, head off problems in personnel cases, to help us develop our writing, and to renew fields. To build that capital, we need to welcome all. We also need to practice strategic essentialism, in Gayatri Spivak's terms, or act through what Donna Haraway (1991) called affinity groups, rather than identity groups. A wide concept of sharing could be one way to do it.

What does it mean to promote women's work within a field that has taken apart the concept of gender as a binary, or women as a distinct category? We have learned to think about gender as performative, and enacting gender as a process that we do through everyday experience. Feminist consciousness is distinct from biological sex, and people come to feminist frameworks through reflection and experience. Anti-essentialism is theoretically fruitful but does little to answer the point that it's women who are underrepresented and who face the cognitive bias that has been getting all the press recently. Without more collective effort we are unlikely to see general recognition of the transformation of knowledge that feminist scholars aspire to. To answer the critique of essentialism while also recognizing that people needed to work together, Donna Haraway (1991) suggested that we conceptualize acting through affinity groups: groups need not be identical to find commonalities and reasons to work together. Indeed, they need not even be distinct. In the social sciences, both fuzzy set theory and intersectionality have promoted useful conceptualizations of how people need not be all one thing or another, or distinct identities (Hancock, 2007). Donna Haraway trained as a biochemist. In honor of that training I'll follow a metaphor from quantum mechanics: the closer we look, the more we are all circulating energy all the way through, and we need not ever find a nugget of fixed matter. Without finding the essential nugget 'woman,' we can find ways to work together in long chains of molecules. However fuzzy the category woman, we need to have venues to promote women's work since women are getting excluded. That category includes all women, including women who trouble our categories.

Advancing diverse women as leaders in the profession through building coalitions could be a matter for an NSF ADVANCE grant, which set institutional transformation toward gender inclusiveness as their task. Most of those grants go to individual universities. However, the economics profession had one. Their grant focused on workshops that would help young women establish careers. Since the skills required for accomplishing the changing work of the university are different while also requiring us to keep doing what we learned to do, there is plenty of room to build on what Economics has done. Thanks to Mitchell and Hesli's (2013) work, we have much of the background knowledge necessary for developing a grant proposal.

Broadening Professional Work in a Changing University

We want to promote women in the profession, and we want to do so in a way that recognizes the need to change what the university does. We need to do so through alliances that support affinity groups in practicing justice and producing just knowledge.

Research on scholarly reputations and salary has focused on traditional scholarship despite the changing climate. In other disciplines, women specialize less than men do, which hinders productivity. Lower productivity makes women less visible in the profession, and less visibility translates both into lower salaries (Leahey, 2007). The narrow specialization that fosters productivity probably does not foster the transformative work universities need. Furthermore, women may work in more interdisciplinary subfields, leading to work that may be cutting edge but may not lead to the branding of

scholarship often necessary to recognition. Social networks help with productivity and its partner, visibility. Both build the credibility that marks a field as worth engaging.

The productivity/specialization trope takes R1s as a model and runs into the demand to teach students through interactive pedagogies, as more universities become tuition dependent, state universities cut funding and private universities worry about their endowment. The push toward research specialization that promotes productivity also runs head long into the call for community engaged research, collaboration, and interdisciplinarity, all of which require time to build relationships and learn new fields. More universities have faculty working in conjunction with international partners, or contributing to building links with communities and recognizing the unjust place of the university in our common lives. For example, both Northwestern University and the University of Denver have convened study groups, issued reports and held healing ceremonies concerning the Sand Creek massacre, which the founder Governor Evans incited (2014 a, b). That reconciliation work is not measured as traditional scholarly research productivity or specialization, and it's all the more important. We can extend our professional alliances beyond our subfields or the local knowledge of our departments even as our scholarship is interdisciplinary. Electronics make it more possible to build our networks across institutional differences and when we cannot travel. Electronics also allow us to share news about work that is central to the changing university, and to build that change.

Borrowing from Other Disciplines: Electronic Resources

We act in our classrooms, in our conferences, in our fieldwork, in our writings, in our departments, in our universities. We also act in the profession, which by now operates much of the time in cyberspace. All the examples in the *Politics and Gender* symposium happen in the real world; more people could learn from these examples if they were available in many places in cyberspace. People exchange reflections, research summaries, flirtations, book reviews, and self-promotion in blogs and on websites. We can build our networks in cyberspace, and we can use those networks to advance equity in the profession, well beyond our own careers or our departments. The profession marks what's happening by listing news on websites; the MPSA features podcasts and summaries of research from *AJPS*. The WPSA has a new journal, and for a while they were featuring live discussions of new books.

Extending our networks electronically can help us through some of the barriers that at some times in our lives can make building networks more difficult. When our institutions can't support travel, or when we have obligations to elderly relatives or children, we can still have blogs and listservs that advise us about who is doing what, who needs help, and who we want to applaud. Blogs can make our names and our work more available. They psychologists tell us we rely upon concepts, people and things that are readily available more often.

We need a brag sheet for women in political science. We need to brag systematically about people we don't know, who are not our friends, for whom we have not done

personal favors, or from whom we have not received any. We need to grant permission to people to post notices about themselves or their students or institutions. A blog with a deliberate mission of promoting women could encourage nominating women for prizes; it could provide a place to discuss changes in university life, and the changes in the profession. It might make feminist social science more available to the popular press, though the *New York Times* editorial I mention above makes me wonder.

The five central blogs in political science as measured by references on other blogrolls are The Monkey Cage, Apt.11D, Crooked Timber, Lawyers, Guns and Money, and Duck of Minerva. All have women among their contributors; we have not coded them for representation of work about women or by women or news about the profession, but it is not their focus. The Monkey Cage and Mischiefs of Faction are the two academic blogs mentioned on the APSA website. A blog could contribute to creating the virtuous circle Mershon and Walsh argue for in the *Politics and Gender* symposium (2014): as women see it as more possible their work will participate in a conversation, or that a conversation leaves space for their contribution, it could provide encouragement to women to get work out. In sociology, as women approached parity in numbers in the profession, they have been as active as men; that could be evaluated in a new context. It could contribute to transforming the discipline, which is the work that Cynthia Daniels (2014) named for her department in the *Politics and Gender* symposium.

What would on-line resources that contribute to bonding, bridging and linking capital look like?

The Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession publishes a newsletter and announcements about accomplishments on its [website](#). It celebrates achievements of all women who are economists, regardless of their particular training or focus of research or teaching. The website reminds people to nominate each other for awards. The newsletter advises people on applying for grants, on putting together a good tenure case, and all the work that goes into a case long before the case actually comes up. [Sociologists for Women in Society](#) also promotes work about women in society and work by women who are sociologists. The Philosophy profession has a blog called [What It's Like Being a Woman In Philosophy](#) and another one within it called "What We're Doing About What it's Like." A blog would allow us to build what we know collaboratively. It would make our work more available to students, colleagues and allies who are not at our institutions. It would allow us to define our work broadly, including changes in teaching, community engagement and service.

In political science, we have some resources and certainly many scholars learn what to do, and do it extremely well. E-mails from the divisions remind us of awards deadlines and news in the profession. The profession has workshops on professional development, both in short courses and before the Midwest meetings. We have better advice on how to write and submit work to journals than we once did. Perhaps we don't have a blog or readily available updated newsletter on the APSA website because our networks are already so good. My first thought is always that I don't know about what's out there because *I'm* out of it and everyone else knows everything. However, the other

disciplines' websites show up on the home pages of the discipline, and ours do not. We probably have room for improvement, since institutions usually do.

In the nature of networks some are left out. The e-mail reminders only go to members of the divisions. The notices are not freely available from the discipline's home site, as the news from CSWEP is. Leaving some out rewards those with better mentors, or those who figure it all out more quickly. Someone will always be left out, and perhaps part of what we mean to measure in academic knowledge is who figures it all out better—how to get a mentor, and follow all the individual advice about how to *Lean In* and live by *The Confidence Code*, do *What Works for Women at Work* and self-promote without seeming to, to specialize while also doing community-engaged work—but even in the unlikely event that's true, measuring who figures it out best does not match the aspiration of sharing knowledge that academia claims.

Awards as an Indicator of Networks (and probably useful but not sufficient for building leadership)

Awards mark success in the profession; I would love to see an evaluation of how they accompany other markers of those who are in leadership positions in the profession, including the varieties of service Mitchell and Hesli (2013) collected. Presses that are good at marketing know that they need to nominate books in their list for awards. I suspect but do not know that willingness to nominate one's own work or agree with friends to nominate each other's work varies by many demographic markers, including gender. Because awards require nomination and many committees take numbers of nomination letters into account when considering awards, they are a decent indicator of the mobilization of networks. In my experience, committees don't have that many submissions unless committee members nominate people themselves. We have a tremendous amount of excellent work out; awards cannot only be an indicator of quality. Awards sorted by gender can indicate whether women are getting nominated, since we have to be in the pool to win.

To see how women have been doing, a student coded all the awards given in all the sections in the last ten years in political science (See charts and tables at the end of the paper). Because we put together all the awards, we did not worry about whether some sections are more or less masculine or feminine, although we did chart the numbers both including and excluding the Women and Politics Section, since the prizes from that section all go to women. Without that section, the percentages awarded to women swing from year to year, from between 24% and 42%. That looks more like who is getting nominated. Indeed, often the award percentages are higher than women's participation in the tenured or tenure-track part of the profession. Separating out Law and Courts awards illuminates what nominating can do. The numbers are very small in Law and Courts, so we could expect bigger swings. Still, it goes from no awards (of six) in 2005 to 71% last year. These were coded for whether a woman won, so men could have also won as co-authors or because they shared the award. Of the 23 awards that women have won in the section, six were co-awarded to men who were not co-authors; that is, 2 separate works won awards six times of the twenty-three. Two of those six co-awards went to men of

color, also an underrepresented group in the profession. That means more than 25% of the awards women have won in the Law and Courts section have been jointly awarded to men. Last year 71% of the awards went to women. At least some of that happened because people mobilized nominations. Strategizing about nominations works, and we can do that.

Inclusion: back to changes in universities

Changing careers towards inclusion is enough. We don't ask that white men do something different or add something other than themselves to the profession when they join. It's only when people who are members of underrepresented groups join a profession that we ask they do something different besides show up to work. Sally Kenney (2013) has developed this argument with regard to women in the judiciary. She points out that much of the variable-driven research on law and the judiciary looks for how women judge differently from men. She argues that on the whole, the differences don't hold up to scrutiny and the judges themselves find the argument annoying and false to the extensive training and work experience they have brought. It ought to be enough to say that equal citizenship requires at a minimum the equal ability to participate in a profession. Women don't need to do something different. Changing our knowledge or the ethics we articulate for how to treat students or colleagues would be an additional (if necessary) benefit. In *Politics and Gender* symposium, Anonymous (2014) writes that if we do not transform the discipline, inclusion has little point. Kenney would answer that if including women queers what we understand to be practicing the profession, we have already accomplished something.

In another article in the *Politics and Gender* symposium, Cynthia Daniels (2014) points out how necessary the changes are. She explains how the department at Rutgers was able to transform itself by making its commitment to diversity explicit, enacting it in speaker series and working groups that addressed gender, race and ethnicity. She argues the department was transformed. As Daniels explains, given the demographic changes among student bodies, departments are both foolish and empirically wrong not to put gender, race and ethnicity at the heart of what they do, and recognizing women not only as the objects of knowledge but knowledge creators and political actors. Feminist scholars have done the scholarship that made teaching about Title IX or anti-sexual violence campaigns part of ordinary teachings, and scholars have raised other problems of domination. In law and courts, the structure of Native American oppression and resistance by law has not been an ordinary part of our textbooks, yet Jill Norgren wrote an exceedingly teachable book (1996) on the Cherokee Cases that is easy to incorporate in classes. Even when we recognize that men have done some of this work, we can return to practicing the project of advancing women through affinity groups, and refer to our work. Young women allied with professors at liberal arts colleges were central in raising sexual assault on college campuses in the current round; if we don't work to undermine elite institution-centered understandings of political knowledge, somebody on social media might do it for us.

As Daniels, Anonymous and Ackerly all said in the symposium in *Politics and Gender*, changing the profession does mean changing what we know. We include intersectionality in our frameworks of analysis. We can include the mobilization of emotions as part of public policy, something that is both widely acknowledged as significant and not yet well integrated into the analysis of policy . If we do it well, making it more visible that we can change what we know, making visible the importance of situated knowledge, we can possibly make the dramatic changes in universities that we are seeing more livable. As new questions get raised, we can all address them, and we can contribute to continuing to change the discipline. Perhaps change could include finding a way to recognize broader contributions, including reading, listening and reconciling in community with others.

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APSA Law and Courts Awards

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Grand Total
	6	6	7	5	5	6	4	7	4	4	2	56
	1		1	2	2	1	3	1	4	3	5	23
	7	6	8	7	7	7	7	8	8	7	7	79
Women%	14	0	12.5	29	29	14	43	13	50	43	71	29

APSA Awards (without Women and Politics)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	66	60	79	59	35	74	69	86	80
	24	28	29	39	11	39	44	34	53
	90	88	108	98	46	113	113	120	133
Women %	27	32	27	40	24	35	39	28	40



