

SEMINAR, MARCH 20, 2018

POL612 Women and Politics

## THE AIM OF THE SEMINAR

- The concept of women's interests
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/19/us/native-american-woman-congress.html?smid=fb-nytimes&smtyp=cur>
- WHAT IS A WOMEN'S INTEREST? WHY? Discuss
- How can we identify women's interest? Suggest methodology.
- Why are we talking about this?

BECKWITH, K. 2011. INTERESTS, ISSUES, AND  
PREFERENCES: WOMEN'S INTERESTS AND  
EPIPHENOMENA OF ACTIVISM

- What is the key argument?
- How can we identify the interest?
- What do we measure it?

## BECKWITH, K. 2011. INTERESTS, ISSUES, AND PREFERENCES: WOMEN'S INTERESTS AND EPIPHENOMENA OF ACTIVISM

- **Interests:** fundamental to women's life chances and options for action
- **Issues:** strategic choices, components of interests as points of mobilization
- **Preferences:** choice of alternative (discrete and limited)
- Interests not as part of essentialist understanding of women but rather as recognition of constant contexts of women's life circumstances and effort to promote women's opportunities for advancing their capabilities, improving their life chances.
- **Meta-interest:** across all groups of women, at all periods of time, in all countries and contexts = access to political power
- Interests articulated in process of political deliberation, but women not present in institutions
- Research of self-organized interest groups and social movements to identify their interests and issues)
- There might be differences within a movement: different preferences on an issue

WELDON, L. 2011. PERSPECTIVES AGAINST  
INTEREST: SKETCH OF A FEMINIST POLITICAL  
THEORY OF WOMEN

- What is the key argument?
- How can we identify the interest?
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# WELDON, L. 2011. PERSPECTIVES AGAINST INTEREST: SKETCH OF A FEMINIST POLITICAL THEORY OF WOMEN

- Shared interest = unnecessary concept
- Because all conceptualization say that those interests are subjective and context specific, which means that they are basically useless
- Interest understood as self-interest
- As maximizing one owns utility
- But women DO NOT share identity, nor experience, nor interest
- It leads to further marginalization of unprivileged women
- She prefers „women’s perspective“ – not based on shared identity but on belonging to the same collectivity (defined by external factors such as oppression or misrepresentation)
- Women who fought against violence on women = do not necessarily shared the experience. Their perspective is driven by the wish of solidarity and justice for all women
- Women's **organization and deliberation** can create shared perspective, opening up possibilities for building solidarity and identifying shared priorities.
- Overlaps with Beckwith = looking at the level of social movements and actors of civil society
- Does not accept strategic framing (Reigold and Swers)

REINGOLD AND SWERS.2011. AN  
ENDOGENOUS APPROACH TO WOMEN'S  
INTERESTS: WHEN INTERESTS ARE  
INTERESTING IN AND OF THEMSELVES

- What is the key argument?
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REINGOLD AND SWERS.2011. AN  
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INTERESTS: WHEN INTERESTS ARE  
INTERESTING IN AND OF THEMSELVES

- They avoid a prior top-down definition
- How to define it and how to measure it?
- In the deliberative processes in political institutions
- How women MPs define women's interests in their work
- How it operates among different groups of legislators
- Low-income minority district vs. white upper-middle-class district
- Who do they have in mind? (voters, co-partisans, party leadership etc.)
- Defining women's interest is a political matter



CAMPBELL AND CHILDS. 2015. TO THE LEFT,  
TO THE RIGHT: REPRESENTING  
CONSERVATIVE WOMEN'S INTERESTS

- What is the key problem?
- What is the argument?
- How do they proceed?
- What is the conclusion?

## CAMPBELL AND CHILDS. 2015. TO THE LEFT, TO THE RIGHT: REPRESENTING CONSERVATIVE WOMEN'S INTERESTS

- Gender-gap in attitudes and party vote
- **Women tend to vote more to the left**
- But not universally
- UK not the case
- But- within party voters – evident gender gap
- Conservative members and voters – gender difference in economic issues
- Women to the left
- Women in the UK suffering from the politics of Conservatives (cuts in public benefits, cuts in public services, cuts in public services jobs (65% of them are female ). D: Cameron – tries to attract female voters.

# CONSTITUTING WOMEN'S INTERESTS

- Promoting women's interest is the main argument of people pursuing political rights of women
- It is the matter of democracy (right?)
- But debates about the core of substantive representation

# CONSTITUTING WOMEN'S INTERESTS

- Celis, Childs, Kantola, Krook 2014
  - Research emphasizes political representation
  - Doesn't reflex **aesthetic and cultural aspects of representation** in broad sense
  - Speaking for somebody, but also speaking about somebody!!
  - Related to construction of group goals and interests also related to WHO the people are
  - Politicians portrayers of the represented: **Representative Claim** (Saward 2016): „ongoing process of making and receiving, accepting, and rejecting claims – in between, and outside electoral cycles“

# CONSTITUTING WOMEN'S INTERESTS

- Call for including deliberation into the concept of interest
- Traditional approach: gendered division of labor
  - Reproductive and productive labor
  - Later scholars left this approach (reduction to biology – or market)
  - Emphasis on their experience
  - 1) Traditional role in patriarchal society
  - 2) Participation in the labor market
  - 3) Possibilities and opportunities to transform their social role (in terms of more gender equality)

# CONSTITUTING WOMEN'S INTERESTS

- The Representative Claim
  - 1) Both elected and non-elected actors make them
  - 2) Actors don't promote preexisting interests but they create them by framing and depicting women and their characteristics
  - 3) Actors are restricted by their context (structure of opportunities)

# WHO MAKES REPRESENTATIVE CLAIMS?

- 1) those who participate in official decision making
- 2) Those who participate in civil society mobilization
- Acknowledgement of the role of men (and their position in the process)
- Representative claims when
  - 1) directly constructed as important to women
  - 2) only affecting women
  - 3) discussed in terms of gender difference
  - 4) spoken of in terms of gendered effects
  - 5) framed in terms of equality between women and men (Celis, Childs, Kantola, Krook 2014))

## WOMEN AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

- Executive powers and leadership
- 1960-2017 a total of 54 women in the highest executive offices
- The first woman: Sirimavo Bandaranaike, 1960
- But which is the supreme executive office??





A close-up portrait of Gro Halem Brundtland, an elderly woman with short, light brown hair. She has a gentle expression and is wearing a maroon top and a necklace with small, colorful beads. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. In the upper left corner, there is a black circle with a white border containing her name.

GRO HALEM  
BRUNDTLAND

EDITH  
CRESSON



## SIRIMAVO BANDARANAIKE

- Change of powers in time
- 1960-65
- 1970-77
- Change of constitution in 1978



## CHANDRIKA KUMARATUNGA

- President 1994-2005
- Appointed her mother PM



WHAT COUNTRY  
WAS THE FIRST TO  
HAVE WOMEN IN  
ALL  
CONSTITUTIONAL  
OFFICES?



NEW ZEALAND (MARCH 2005-AUGUST 2006)





## IRELAND

President Robinson (1990-97)

President McAleese (1997-2011)



# HISTORY OF WOMEN IN POWERFUL OFFICES

- Usually wives or daughters of politicians
- 42 % women in offices before 1995
- “Widow’s walk to power”
- Especially in countries with traditional view of women
- Helping men, controllable
- Keeping husband’s (father’s) legacy
- Indira Ghandi, Benazir Bhutto
- Violeta Chamorro (president of Nicaragua 1990-1997): *„I’m doing this for Pedro and the Country”*
- Ásif Alí Zardárí (president 2008-2013)



# HISTORY OF WOMEN IN POWERFUL OFFICES

- Mostly countries of the Global South
- The first woman in power in the Global North was ...?

A close-up portrait of Margaret Thatcher, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. She is smiling broadly, showing her teeth, and has her right hand raised in a gesture. She is wearing a blue jacket over a dark, patterned blouse and large pearl earrings. Her hair is styled in her characteristic voluminous, blonde, feathered look. The background is a solid, deep blue.

MARGARET  
THATCHER

# WOMEN IN POWER

- Through political parties
- To be a leader of the state requires people to be leaders of a party first
- O'Brien 2015: 1965-2013 in 11 countries, across 71 parties, only 14 female leaders
- (AUS, AUT, CAN, DEN, FIN, GER, IR, JAP, NZ, SWE, UK)
- Female leaders more likely in small parties, parties losing votes
- Female leaders tend to leave when party is losing votes (compared to men)

# GLASS CLIFF

- More opportunities in times of crisis
- When parties lose electorate
- Women asked to lead organizations facing difficulties
  
- Examples?

MIROSLAVA  
NĚMCOVÁ

ODS 

# Premiérka

pro rozbouřenou dobu

Miroslava Němcová

[www.nasepremierka.cz](http://www.nasepremierka.cz)

 #Volím\_pravici



## GLASS CLIFF

- Jalalzai 2013, how women come to power:
- 19% after transition to another pol. system
- 45 % in times of significant political instability
- 33% after a coup d'état

## DIFFICULTIES

- Gender stereotypes and leadership
- Traditional roles
- Women assumed to be less competent
- Maria Liberia-Peters (PM of the Dutch Antilles): *"And you had to put al into it, and everybody expected you to put everything into it, because nobody questions the preparedness of a man over a female (.. ) so you have to put 100 percent, 200 percent in your work."*
- More often PMs than Presidents (power sharing)
- Presidents usually not elected in popular election
- Exceptions exist, though: Michelle Bachelet of Chile, Ellen Johnson Sirelaf of Liberia etc.
- 1960-2011 60 % national leaders shared powers



## DIFFICULTIES

- Role of a woman
  - Being nice or “man murdering power woman”?
- Family and motherhood
- Marriage difficulties
- Benazir Bhutto had to get married
- To have children or not to have children?



# Jacinda Ardern: New Zealand prime minister announces first pregnancy

Labour PM says deputy Winston Peters will take over for six weeks when baby is born in June



New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern announces she's pregnant with first child - video

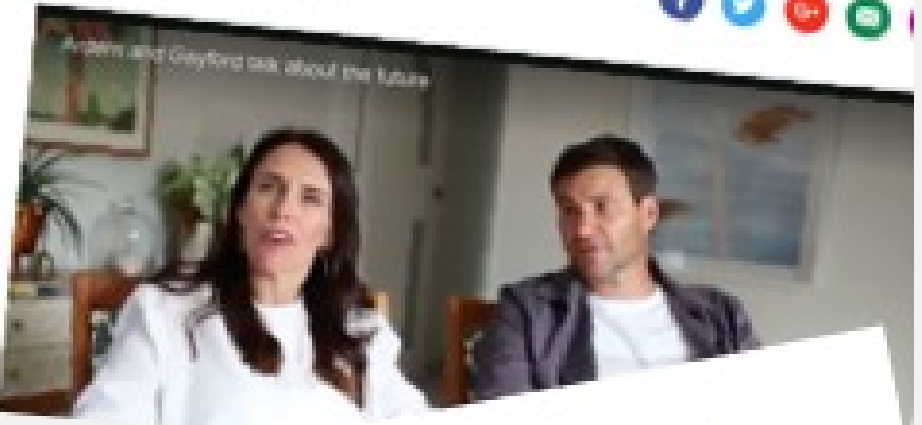
## 'Unacceptable': New Zealand's Labour leader asked about baby plans seven hours into job

Anger after Jacinda Ardern is made to field questions about whether she might end up taking maternity leave in office



## 10 things Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern needs to know about having a baby

KAREN HARRIS  
Last updated 10:48 January 22 2018



## New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern reveals she is pregnant



Morning Mix

# New Zealand's prime minister is pregnant. 'I am not the first woman to multitask,' she says.

THANK YOU!

- Email questions to [hrbkova@mail.muni.cz](mailto:hrbkova@mail.muni.cz)