

**AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**

# **WOMEN AND POLITICS**

**NETWORK NEWSLETTER**

**February 1995, Issn: 1171-9273**

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**Aotearoa /New Zealand  
Women and Politics  
Network**

at Lincoln University organised  
printing and the mail out.

**ISSN: 117-9F273**

**The idea** was born out of  
meetings of the NZ Political  
Science Association Conference.

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

Over **300 copies** of this  
newsletter have been circulated.  
Newsletters are published  
two/three times a year.

Next issue: July 1995

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Bronwyn Hayward and her 'team'

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## **RESEARCHING WOMEN AND POLITICS**

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### **Women Researching Women Abroad**

#### **Jennifer Curtin**

I am a doctoral candidate at the Australian National University, researching the strategies that women trade unionists use to get women's issues onto the trade union agenda. This project is comparative in content, focusing on four countries: Australia, Sweden, Austria and Israel. To gather relevant material, much of which would be in the form of interviews, I needed to go abroad. What follows are some tips about organising and coping with such an experience. For academics, this is probably purely academic, as staying in hotels, with contacts already made, or at university colleges, is no doubt the norm. But for first-timers, what may seem obvious to others, is not always so.

Firstly, it is important to realise that no matter how organised you are, there are still any number of things that can and/or will go wrong that are beyond your control. Careful planning is nevertheless important. Sometimes being a woman abroad means we have to take a little more care with details that revolve around security. Much of what I suggest, I learnt only from experience.

In terms of actually getting money for fieldwork abroad, it is a good idea to look around well in advance of your proposed trip. Talk to people about what is

available and peruse University circulars. It's amazing how good scholarships and grants may have the smallest advertisements.

When drawing up a proposal on how much you need for your trip, don't forget the small things.

Tickets, accommodation and food are obvious, but there are also public transport costs, including to and from airports, which can often be expensive. Phone cards are required to set up interviews or even conducting telephone interviews. Get an International Student Card. They cost around ten dollars, and often entitle you to discounts on public transport, into museums and so on.

When organising tickets, check your visa requirements. If you are travelling overland, ask the travel agent to list which countries you may pass through. I had the scary experience of being on a Brussels-London bus, assumed it went via Ostende, but found out 5 minutes before reaching the French border, that it in fact went via Calais. I needed a visa for France which I did not have. Luckily, there were no officers on border control. If there had been, I would have been put off the bus and sent back to Brussels, which would have resulted in me missing my next connection.

In terms of the logistics of travel, there are a couple of things to remember. Try and arrive and depart in daylight hours, allowing yourself adequate time to take public transport (taxis are a luxury that doctoral students are unlikely to be able to afford). Some places are safe at night, but many are not, and the risk is not worth it. Regarding accommodation: if you are not using university hostels, but general hostels, it's often a good idea to find out whether the

area the hostel is in is safe. I got caught out on this point, and it's not pleasant having your safety threatened.

Try and travel light, although this can be difficult. Send excess written material home - there are often special economy rates offered for books and papers, so check at the post office. This can save you much effort, and lots of cash, if you do it right. If your interviewee is from an organisation that can afford it, ask them to send the information home for you, if you don't require it immediately.

If you are doing a lot of travelling around as part of your research, it is a good idea to get fit before leaving. Fieldwork very easily becomes exhausting: constantly dealing with new and often strange environments, different food, culture and languages is both exciting and draining on your mind and body. It's important then to stay as healthy as possible. Think about your diet, and rest. Try and get regular exercise, even if it's just walking. Sometimes you may have to do a number of interviews in one day with little time to stop to eat, so take something in your bag to munch on, and water to drink, to keep you going. Intense interviewing requires a lot of energy.

Be realistic about how much you can fit into your trip, and don't be afraid to take time out from time to time, to indulge yourself. While what you are doing may seem glamorous to others, what you are undertaking may often prove difficult and demanding. So, just keep an eye on how your mind and body are coping with it.

Not everyone gets homesick, but I did at different times. In terms of calling home, this is not always easy. International phone cards, and credit cards are not acceptable everywhere. Avoid calling from hotels as this can sometimes double the cost of the call. If you really get stuck, go to the post office and find out the best way to call home.

Useful things to carry with you are small dictionaries, even if just for finding the right bus, your hostel, or getting around a supermarket - enabling you to distinguish yoghurt from cream cheese. A transistor radio, especially if it has short wave, is nice when you want to catch up on news from home or places close to home. Take printed address cards, even if they are only printed on paper. Swapping cards is often part of the ritual of interviewing, and also saves energy and hassle.

It's obviously important to make contacts before leaving home. Academic contacts are very useful, as they may be able to provide you with an institutional base. If you can organise interview dates from a distance, fine, but this is not always possible. If not, approach your contacts immediately on arrival, as often they know of other people you should see. In this regard, it's good to be flexible with your timetable. Don't book yourself up completely in advance - keep some time free for the spontaneous interviews that pop up. They are frequently the ones that prove most interesting.

Finally, one comment passed on to me before I left was "don't always feel you are putting them out. Respondents may also enjoy and get something out of talking with you, as you do with them". This

was borne out a number of time while I was away - one woman said talking with me helped her see her work in a way she hadn't thought of before, while another spent four hours with me before taking me to lunch. When I expressed my gratitude for her generosity, she said that it was she who felt honoured that someone was interested enough in her work to travel half way round the world to speak with her about it.

Much of what I have said above may sound negative - but I don't really mean it to be. Researching women abroad is a very stimulating experience, and the information I have gathered is wonderful. However, it's also important to be aware of the practicalities, just so that you can enjoy the whole experience even more.

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## **Problems of Doing Post-Graduate Research on Women and Politics**

### **Heather Devere**

The discipline of political science does not have a good record of addressing women's concerns. It has been easy to exclude women as subjects of research because it has been argued that political science is concerned with the study of political power and institutions of government. Women became invisible because they are disproportionately represented among the powerless rather than the powerful. It is therefore very important to find ways of including women into political science research, because otherwise it reinforces the impression that politics is irrelevant for women.

There are, however, a number of obstacles to overcome if you do decide to contribute to this body of knowledge. In order to concentrate on women and politics, it is necessary to challenge the discipline of political science itself. Firstly, there is a debate about what constitutes the discipline of politics and what sort of definitions about politics should be used. Conventional definitions of politics which are concerned with institutions, state, power and public decision-making<sup>1</sup> have been challenged by feminists as being definitions of politics from a male perspective. Kate Millet, for example, saw politics as being much broader and being concerned with 'power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another'.<sup>2</sup> Students of politics wanting to research women's issues, will often be questioned about how their

research topic qualifies as a political science topic. Wouldn't it be more appropriate for them to be studying sociology or philosophy, for example? For some of these students, the answer is to include in the title of their thesis the words 'the politics of...', so we have had 'The Politics of Patriarchy', 'The Politics of Childcare'.<sup>3</sup> I was careful to make sure that the word 'political' appeared in the title of my own thesis 'Political Labels and Women's Attitudes' which is about women's attitudes to civil rights or ethical issues.

Another difficulty when researching women and politics, is that up until fairly recently, there was a dearth of published research which one could use as a model for one's own research. Political science, too, has been tardy in using more qualitative research methodologies. Political science, particularly in my field of political behaviour, has concentrated to a large extent on quantitative survey research and so much of the literature which relates to qualitative research is available in disciplines other than political science. I had to consult literature on research methodology from disciplines as diverse as sociology, marketing, anthropology, philosophy and psychology.

In addition, much of the research which has been carried out within political science has served merely to reinforce existing myths about women in politics and women's political behaviour. Although quantitative research is supposedly more 'objective' than qualitative research, feminist theorists have argued that there is evidence of an androcentric bias which permeates allegedly value-neutral quantitative research.<sup>4</sup> So

the research on women's political attitudes which for years claimed that women were more conservative than men has been found by feminist researchers often to have been based on faulty research which has distorted the findings.<sup>5</sup> In New Zealand, the research which had reinforced myths about women's conservatism was based on very few surveys, most of which were of an individual electorate rather than nationwide, and so could hardly constitute firm support for the hypothesis. Other evidence, in fact, supports the view that women have a tendency to be more liberal and give more support to the Labour Party.<sup>6</sup>

Some feminist researchers have argued that quantitative research represents the male style of knowing and that qualitative research (where researchers have to adopt a more personal approach and which can be used to produce 'soft' data) represents the female style of knowing. However, this means that there is the danger that qualitative research on women can be marginalised because it is not taken seriously or regarded as rigorous research by the academic hierarchy.<sup>7</sup>

Ann Oakley has also argued that 'the mythology of "hygienic" research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the research as objective instruments of data production' needs to be replaced. There needs to be a recognition of personal involvement by the researcher in the research process and research reports should include information about the personal characteristics and feelings of those doing the interviews as well as the

respondents.<sup>8</sup> However, the tradition of reporting on research in political science theses still requires to a large extent an impersonal, 'objective' and detached style.

These were some of the problems I have faced attempting research on women and politics. However, these problems can also lead to opportunities and (surmountable) challenges. The lack of research on women and politics in New Zealand, means that you will be contributing valuable and much-needed information to the body of knowledge. There is much original research still to be done. The field has not been cornered. There are rewards in terms of acknowledgment, even from staid and conservative academics, that your work does indeed challenge a somewhat complacent discipline. And then, even though it's not quite done to admit this, the research process can be an amazingly enjoyable experience as you meet your women 'subjects' who are interesting, stimulating and astute women, and as you learn that there is lots of support around from fellow women academics who have often battled against the odds to achieve their goals.

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- 1 For example, David Easton, *The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science*, Knopf, New York, 1953.
  - 2 Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics*, Abacus, London, 1971, p.23.

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- 3 Robin Ingram, 'The Politics of Patriarchy: The Response of Capital and Organised Labour to the Movement of Women into the Paid Workforce in New Zealand', unpublished MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1988; and Kath Gordon, 'From Treasury to "treasures": the Politics of Childcare', unpublished MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1992.
  - 4 For example, Mary E. Hawkesworth, 'Beyond Methodological Monism' in Maria J. Falco (ed.), *Feminism and Epistemology: Approaches to Research in Women and Politics*, Harworth Press, New York, 1987; Maria Mies, 'Towards a Methodology for Feminist Research' in Gloria Bowless and Renate Duelli-Klein (eds.), *Theories of Women's Studies*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1983; Hilary Graham, 'Do Her Answers Fit His Questions?' Women and the Survey Method', in E. Gamarnikow et al (eds.), *The Public and the Private*, London, Heinemann, 1983, p.136 and M. Goot and E. Reid, *Women and Voting Studies: Mindless Matrons or Sexist Scientism?* Sage Professional Papers in Comparative Political Sociology, 1975.
  - 5 Carol Bacchi, 'Women and Peace Through the Polls', *Politics*, Vol.21, No.2, November 1986; Pippa Norris, 'Conservative Attitudes in Recent British Elections: An Emerging Gender Gap', *Political Studies*, Vol.24, 1986 and Jill Hills, 'Britain', in Joni Lovenduski and Jill Hills (eds.), *The Politics of the Second Electorate: Women and Public Participation*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981.



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- 6 See, or example, Heather Devere, 'The Gender Gap in New Zealand: Voting and Attitudes', unpublished conference paper presented to the Australasian Political Studies Association Conference, Sydney, September 1989.
- 7 See Graham, *op. cit.*
- 8 Ann Oakley, 'Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms' in Helen Roberts, *Doing Feminist Research*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981.

## **Researching Women and the Environment**

### **Lorraine Elliott**

At both the global and domestic level, the debate about environmental degradation, its causes and its solutions, has proceeded as if such degradation impacts equally and in the same way on women and men. In other words, environmental insecurity is assumed to be gender-neutral. Yet there is a strong aspect of gender-specificity in environmental degradation. Further, policy debates on environmental concerns have been gendered in a number of significant ways that have marginalised women and their experiences and expertise. Research on women (and 'woman') and the environment is more than an exercise in adding women to the debate. Rather it involves making both woman and women visible, and examining the nature and basis of their invisibility. This paper provides a brief coverage of some of the key political issues which relate to the topic of women and the environment.

Women's lives in developing countries are closely connected with ecosystem management - as primary producers of food, the collectors of water and the managers of energy. Environmental degradation which damages land, removes forest, affects agriculture and diminishes water resources can thus have a major impact on women's lives and their 'domestic' responsibilities. As Vandana Shiva notes, women bear the ecological costs of progress and development. Women are often doubly disadvantaged by

environmentally damaging development practices, such as commercial forestry and land-clearance for large-scale agriculture or Green Revolution technologies. This disproportionate and differential impact of environmental degradation is also relevant to women in the 'developed' world where studies show that women are still predominantly responsible for household management and thus for decisions about energy and water use as well as more proximately affected by issues such as environmental pollution. Responsibility for making environmentally sound consumer choices is often made a household - and therefore a women's - one, thus reinforcing the home as the site of private and ecological morality even when, as Eckersley notes, women are less implicated in the major activities and centres of ecological destruction. The relationship between women and the environment is also pertinent to the 'population' debate in which population pressures are often identified as a source of environmental degradation. This issue is most often defined as a problem of fertility, particularly in so-called 'Third World women', rather than one of consumption. Thus the identification of the problem and the nature of the solution (family planning and birth control with much less emphasis on education and empowerment of women) is both gendered and tied to the status and role of women.

While there has been some recognition of the connections between women's lives and environmental degradation, it has for the most part been in special conferences mobilised by women. Little attention has been paid to women or questions of gender in

key environmental texts. The Brundtland Report, for example, makes almost no mention of this issue. Gender issues were taken up at the PrepComms for the Rio Summit only after intense lobbying by women and the outcomes of that summit are mixed in terms of their attention to women and to gender. Agenda 21, the programme of action which was finalised at Rio, includes a chapter devoted specifically to the role of women in sustainable and equitable development and relates this participation to a number of other issues of concern to women, including violence, education, property rights, and somewhat muted references to control over reproduction and fertility. Nevertheless, Agenda 21 is something of a wish-list and is non-binding on governments, many of whom have done little for women in the past. Since the Rio summit, women and the environment has been a focus of attention at the UN Commission for the Status of Women, and the forthcoming Beijing Conference has been targeted as a forum for reviewing progress on these concerns.

The Executive Director of the UN Population Fund has observed that if energy, land and water are the keys to survival, then the keys are held by the women of the world. If women are detrimentally affected by environmental degradation, and if their participation is important to the search for solutions, then it makes sense to ask 'where are women'? The question is more than a statistical one. It is a political one which, in exposing absences, reveals not only where women are but where they are not. While women are disproportionately affected by environmentally

damaging processes, women are under-represented in formal decision-making on environmental issues and their voices are, for the most part, not heard and not sought. Yet this does not mean that women are not active on environmental issues. Women have been, and continue to be, active and effective participants in non-governmental organisations and in grass-roots movements. Nevertheless, while it would seem that women make up half or more of the membership of environmental organisations, public figures within the environmental movement still tend to be men, a statistic which responds to and reinforces the idea of the public domain as men's domain. While women's visibility in grass roots movements and NGOs contrasts strongly with their invisibility and absences in formal decision-making arenas, that visibility is itself connected to the marginalisation of such activity in the global environment debate. The structural factors which have prevented women from becoming involved in formal processes have ensured that they will seek avenues for participation at the 'margins'. Yet that participation, coupled with the view that women's activities are inherently less valuable, also ensures that these areas will continue to be marginalised. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to perceive such activity as a response to marginalisation. Women's mobilisation is a positive act of agency in movements which may well be based on values more amenable to women's lived experiences.

Environmental degradation has been identified not only as a women's concern but also as a feminist concern. Feminist

scholarship has provided an analysis of environmental destruction which locates the domination (and subsequent degradation) of nature within a masculinist world view and identifies parallels and connections with the oppression of women. Scholars such as Carolyn Merchant explore connections between mechanistic and masculinist view of nature arising from the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment, and the metaphors of domination and control over both nature and women which arise within the development of the liberal state and the construction and maintenance of the public/private dichotomy. Connections between women/woman and environment/nature and between feminism and ecology have been most critically explored within that body of feminist scholarship which has been labelled ecofeminism. As Ariel Salleh notes, as a political project, ecofeminism calls simultaneously for a review of man's relationship to nature and man's relationship to woman. There is, however, considerable diversity within ecofeminist scholarship although two basic strands of ecofeminism can be identified (Val Plumwood's work is particularly helpful on this). Biological or cultural ecofeminism portrays women's identification with nature as one which is inherent (arising from women's reproductive and nurturing roles) and as providing a superior insight. Social ecofeminism acknowledges the gendered nature of women's experiences of nature under patriarchy, but locates this in the social construction of women's lives rather than as an essentialist principle, seeking thus to move beyond dualisms or a strategy of

uncritical reversal (as Plumwood describes it).

There is a lot of useful empirical and 'theoretical' material available on women and environment. A brief list of books might include:

Joni Seager *Earth Follies*, Vandana Shiva *Staying Alive*, Anabel Rodda *Women and the Environment*, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva *Ecofeminism*, Val Plumwood *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, Rosa Braidotti et al., *Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development*.

UNIFEM has produced a document entitled Agenda 21: An Easy Reference to the Specific Recommendations on Women. Journals such as *The Ecologist* or *Environmental Ethics* often have articles on women/feminism and environment. The WorldWIDE network, based in Washington DC, is a global network of women in environment and development and produces a directory of women with interests in these issues as well as a newsletter. WEDO (Women's Environment and Development Organisation) based in New York is another well-known and active organisation. There is at least one electronic forum - ECOFEM - on Internet which is devoted to women/gender/feminism and environment. It is archived (via gopher or telnet) at [csf.colorado.edu](http://csf.colorado.edu).

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## CONFERENCE REPORTS

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### 'Waving or Drowning': Report on the Australasian Political Studies Association 1994 Annual Conference

**Elizabeth Shannon**

Addressing the 'Women Power and Politics' International Conference (Adelaide, Oct.8-11, 1994), Professor Catherine Stimpson exhorted her audience to grasp the fruits of knowledge with both hands. In the struggle to emancipate the power of women's minds, she said, there have been three great waves. The first wave was for access to the institutions of education. The second was for transformation of those institutions: the curriculum, the pedagogy, and the ethic of learning. "The third wave", she thundered, "is upon us, but, where is it going?"

Having just come from the Australasian Political Studies Association (APSA) 1994 Annual Conference (1-3 October, University of Wollongong), I thought I probably should know. After all, over 150 academics had gathered to present about 120 papers under a dozen different 'streams'. Yet to find one overarching theme where one could say, "This is where the 'wave' of women's learning is taking us", was almost impossible. Women presented only 34 papers, although on a wide range of topics, and issues of gender were

dealt with by both women and men.

The Gender Studies stream contained 5 papers:

Joan Eveline (Australian National University) presented 'Surviving the Belt Shop Blues: Women Miners and Critical Acts'. This was a critical analysis of affirmative action practices in contemporary Australia: do they actually advantage men?

John McCrystal (University of Auckland) presented 'Eve's Apron Strings - The Emergence of New Notions of Women in the Crisis of Traditional English Society'. He argued that the 17thC English writers were influenced by the secularisation of society in their view and portrayal of women.

Helen Pringle (University of New South Wales) presented 'Freedom of Speech, Pornography and Consent'. By understanding pornography as a form of discrimination, this paper argued, the notion of consent is no longer a valid defence against regulation.

TA and SA Rowland (Griffith University) presented 'The Ontology of the Feminine in the Work of Edith Stein'. They discussed the writer's ideas as anticipating the contemporary debates within feminist scholarship.

Tony Smith (New South Wales) presented 'Corruption and Gender'. Corruption relates to gender where old elites attempt to exploit, informally, mechanisms legally discredited over the last three decades of feminism.

Another five papers were presented which, although in other 'streams', were explicitly related to gender issues:

Patty Renfrow (University of Queensland) 'Explaining the Gender Gap', presented a multivariate analysis of gender differences in Australian support for political parties.

Elissa Keen (Australian National University) 'Concepts of Human Nature in John Stuart Mill's the Subjection of Women', argued that an agnostic view of men's and women's natures is the basis of this famous work.

Liz van Acker (Griffith University) 'Winners and Losers: Gender Concerns in the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Industry Policy', suggested that while there have been some gains for women, major victories are scarce, the main losers being the outworkers and those retrenched because of tariff reductions.

Elizabeth Eddy (University of Queensland) 'Gender Issues in Tutorial Teaching', focussed on creating a more congenial learning environment for female students.

Liz van Acker (Griffith University), 'The Joys of Teaching Blokes in an MBA', discussed the difficulties in teaching groups with a diverse gender and ethnic mix!

Finally, at least 2 other papers also dealt with gender issues, although not as a dominant theme:

Elizabeth Shannon (University of Tasmania), 'Beyond Networks and Communities: Sabatier's Advocacy Coalition Framework and Concept of Policy-Oriented Learning' contained a case study on funding policies for women's shelters in Australia.

Rodney Smith (University of New South Wales) 'Political Parties in Contemporary Australian Drama' contained an analysis of male/female roles in 'Don's Party'.

Third wave? I feel like I'm drowning in a sea of diversity. Whether this is a tortured or ecstatic experience is debatable. Perhaps the third wave is one of saturation! This implies less of a direction than an expansion. One of the key phrases which did the rounds of 'Women Power and Politics' was 'critical mass'. That which occurs when women make up at least one third of a group, or in this case, a set of conference papers. Academia has a long way to go, in either case, at least on this side of the Tasman.

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*for the Australian Political Studies Association Women's Caucus Electronic Newsletter, 'WAPS:news'. She can be contacted on E.Shannon@polsci.utas.edu.au.*

## **Report on the International Communication Association 1994 Conference**

### **Alison Wilson**

The International Communication Association is a predominantly American association and generally has its conferences in the States. However, one year in five it has it in another continent and in 1994 Sydney hosted a joint Australian and International conference called 'Communication and Diversity', 11-15 July at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Over the five days of the conference over 1000 papers were offered to the 1000 or so participants. Communication is a vast field and the organisers split the papers into 'subject' areas - Information Systems, Interpersonal Communication, Intercultural Communication, and Organisational Communication were some of these. However, the sessions that interested me were those in Political Communication, Mass Communication, Feminist Scholarship, Popular Communication, Philosophy of Communication, Media Studies and Visual Communication.

With some 10 sessions, and up to five papers offered in each session at one time, the problem of choice was acute and often there would be a paper in one area that looked promising and one in another, so room-hopping was common and

irritating, not to mention mildly distressing for those whose papers were obviously deemed not interesting enough and walked out on.

The majority of the papers offered were by Americans, but Australians, New Zealanders, Taiwanese and Koreans were also contributors. The most 'absent' were European contributions.

Some papers which might be of interest include:

Bernadette Barker-Plummer, U of Pennsylvania, 'Getting the Word Out: Problems in the Mass Communications of Feminism(s)' (863)

Lori A. Bergen and Jennifer W. Mueller, Wichita State U, 'Constructing the Abortion Controversy on Local Television News: Operation Rescue's 'Summer of Mercy' in Wichita' (892)

Bertrand, Ina, La Trobe U, 'An Even Break? Women Working in Australian University' (236)

Chakravarty, Sumita S, The New School of Social Research, New York, 'The Erotics of Emancipation: Deploying the Female Body in Filmic Space-Time'.(266)

Charlene A. Dellinger and Roger C. Aden, Ohio U, 'Home Improvement's False Sense of Balance: A Study in the Construction of Gender' (141)

Karey Harrison, U of Southern Queensland, 'Censorship and a Feminist Critique of "Liberalism"' (819)

Caroline Hatcher, Queensland U of Technology, 'Thinking Beyond Master-Narratives: A Transgressive Tale?' (041).

Sharon Hartin Iorio, Wichita State U, 'Personal Concerns and Political Issues on Media Agendas: First-person Accounts' (061)

Deborah Jones, U of Waikato, 'Ethnic Identity as 'the Appearance of Substance': Reframing Intercultural Communication from a Feminist Post-Structuralist Perspective'.(271)

Sheena Malhotra, David Lowry and Milton Shatzer, Pepperdine U, 'Satellite Television Viewership and Perception of Women's Gender Roles in India' (558)

Suzanne McCorkle, Boise State U, 'Standpoint Analysis of Maya Angelou's Poem Dedicating the Inauguration of Bill Clinton as the US President' (609)

Hilaire Natt, Edith Cowan U, 'TV Comedy: Women, Bodies and Bodies of Humour' (386)

Bonney Rega and Jane W. Peterson, Iowa State U, 'Spiral of Silence and the Defeat of the Iowa ERA' (865)

Karin L. Sandell, Dru Riley Avarts and Christine Mattley, Ohio U, 'Gender Gap or Rhetoric Gap in the 1992 Presidential Campaign? A Case Study in Ohio' (123)

Cherise Saywell, U of Queensland, 'Feminine Discourses and Women's Oral Cultures: Examining Representations of AIDS in Australian Women's Magazines' (778)

Anita Taylor, George Mason, U Fairfax and Judi Bernstein Miller, 'Gender Diversity: Conceptions of a Changeable Variable' (272)

Jimmie D. Trent and Paul A. Mongeau, Miami U and Judith S. Trent, U of Cincinnati, 'Facial Attractiveness and Initial Choice Among Political Candidates: The Effect of Sex and Race' (121)

Papers are available from the ICA - at a cost - but you will need an order form which has just been sent to those who went to the conference, so you could get papers that interest you by contacting:

**Alison Wilson**  
16 Argyle Street  
Herne Bay  
Auckland

or

**Heather Devere**  
Communication Studies Dept.  
Auckland Institute of Technology  
Private Bag 92006

Auckland

Please give the order numbers which are shown in brackets.

*Alison Wilson lectures in media studies at Manukau Polytechnic.*  
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## TEACHING NEWS

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### Women in Politics at the University of Otago

#### Sarah Heal

Many exciting things happened at Otago last year. There were two courses taught in the Honours year which dealt with gender issues. Brian Roper taught a course entitled 'The Politics of Social Inequality' which addresses issues of ethnicity, gender and class. The key question considered in the gender section of the course is 'To what extent is New Zealand society characterised by gender inequality?' This encompasses a number of aspects of gender politics. The existing patterns of inequality within the family-household and within the paid workforce are investigated. Attention then turns to the attempts of feminists to provide a materialist explanation of gender inequality by reference to the relationship between economic production and human reproduction. The extent to which New Zealand is a gendered culture is considered. Also included in this section of the course are considerations of heterosexism, the women's liberation movement and liberal, radical and social feminist views of the state and political strategy.

Jindra Tichy taught a course on Liberal Political Theory. The first half of this course considers 'Western Woman's Road to Liberation'. This is divided into three sections. The first of these considers the philosophical arguments in favour of equality, the second examines the legal position of Western women and the third compares the situation of Western women with that of Islamic women.

It was also possible to substitute two Women's Studies papers for Political Studies papers. Paper 201 is entitled 'Aspects of Feminist Theory' and Paper 301 develops this theme looking at 'Locating Feminisms: Gender/Knowledge/Power'.

Dr. Jindra Tichy is the only woman lecturer in the department. Some students have expressed concern at the existing gender imbalance. Fifty percent of the department's postgraduate students were women. The department also employs women tutors at both first and second year levels.

The department has one woman PhD. student, Sabina Lautensach, who is studying the implications of the driftnet fishing ban. There were also five women M.A. students working on the following theses:

- Harriet Butler "Women and the Welfare State"
- Jennifer Elder "Women and Democracy"
- Sarah Heal "The Struggle For and Against the Employment Contracts Act 1987-1991" (completed June 1994)
- Catherine McMechan, "The New Zealand Aid Programme's Integration of 'Women in Development'"
- Cairine Meier "Antarctica and International Relations: Non-governmental organisations and their influences within international regimes"

*Sarah Heal was an MA student and Research Assistant in the Political Studies Department at the University of Otago.*

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## Theses on Women

The following theses are in progress/completed on women in New Zealand Politics:

Heather Devere, 'Political Labels and Women's Attitudes', University of Auckland, Ph.D. thesis (completed).

Jean Drage, 'Women as Political Leaders in Local Government', Victoria University of Wellington.

Tonya Greenaway, 'Token Minorities: A Study of National and Labour Candidates Contesting the 1975, 1984 and 1990 New Zealand General Elections', University of Auckland, MA Thesis (completed).

Fiona McNab, 'Gender Differences Relating to Certain New Zealand Political Issues', University of Canterbury, MA thesis.

Deirdre Shaw, 'The Work of Farming Women', University of Waikato, MA Thesis (completed).

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**Helena Catt and Elizabeth McLeay (eds.), *Women and Politics in New Zealand*, Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1993.**

**Reviewed by Jane Verbitsky**

This collection of essays began life as papers presented at the December 1992 seminar of the NZ



Politics Research Group.  
Published - appropriately - in women's suffrage centennial year, the nine essays cluster around the rubric of women and politics, with contributors exploring different aspects of, and approaches to, this topic. The subject matter is consequently broad. It ranges from discussions on the vexed question of defining feminism, and the utility of participatory democracy for achieving feminist objectives, through to the political representation of women, and analysis of the "gender factor" in political participation, electoral behaviour, and interest group activity.

However, despite the wide range of issues and concerns addressed in this publication, it is not a piecemeal collection. The essays are linked by two recurring themes, "the importance of labels and recognising diversity within their scope; and how women are often hidden actors in the political process". Critical issues in feminist scholarship, these themes shape and enliven the proceedings.

Three essays, in particular, stand out as engaging and addressing these themes. Elizabeth McLeay addresses the issue of women's relative invisibility in her examination of female parliamentary representation. As McLeay points out, 76 years after women became eligible for election to the House of Representatives, there is still a sharp differential between the levels of male and female representation in NZ. Ironically, though, the representation of women at national level is distinctly greater in NZ than in Canada, Britain, Australia or the US. Why the difference?

McLeay's research confirms Vernon Bogdanon's thesis that the type of electoral system (PR or plurality/majority) adopted by a country is a significant factor in the numbers of women (and minorities) elected to legislatures. Analysis of comparative evidence, however, leads McLeay to add another factor equally important in explaining NZ's anomalous position among countries similarly employing single member plurality/majority systems. That factor is the local political culture and, in this context, particular reference is made to the recent history of women's relationships with political institutions and their roles, status, and activism within NZ parties.

Great expectations have been laid upon the Mixed Member Proportional system to more accurately and effectively represent previously under-represented groups in the community. McLeay's research, though, sounds a note of warning that MMP may not live up to the expectations of women who see it as a vehicle for increased representation and political brokerage. Whilst MMP does, theoretically, seem to offer women a chance of greater political participation, there are many unknowns as to its practical operation. McLeay points to the potential for corruption of the party list selection process as an example of factors which may inhibit or prevent the realisation of expectations.

Invisibility is also a central theme in Jean Drage's study of women elected as members of hospital or area health boards prior to the 1991 health reforms. These "overlooked" women of local

government, argues Drage, were remarkably successful in achieving election, especially when compared to women seeking election to central government. In 1989, for example, nearly three times as many women were elected to area health boards as won parliamentary seats in the 1990 general election. Drage's analysis thus focuses on the elements which made women's participation in this aspect of local government so effective.

Unfortunately, there is no happy ending, no ability to use that combination of elements as an exemplar for other women seeking a voice in this area of local government. Such participation was ended with the abolition of elected area boards during the National Government's restructuring of the health services. As one woman quoted by Drage remarked, "as women gained power ... the situation was changed so that they couldn't retain power".

The third of the essays which particularly engage the central themes of the collection is that by Jennifer Curtin and Heather Devere. In a "Plurality of Feminisms" Curtin and Devere explore conceptions and perceptions of feminism, examining the difficulties of defining feminism and the varying ways in which women view and interpret feminism. As the authors note, feminism is not a unitary category, and the divergent traditions from which it developed (the evangelical movement, communitarianism, socialism, and the Enlightenment) provide imperatives almost impossible to reconcile within a single, all-encompassing definition.

This diversity is reflected in the way in which women themselves understand feminism. In interviews, Curtin and Devere found that less than half of their subjects "were happy to identify with feminism or considered themselves to be feminists". However, many of those same women supported values often associated with feminism. Curtin and Devere's findings hence challenge the notions that "feminism" or "feminist" are discrete, tidy labels to apply in the examination of women's political attitudes. Such examinations have traditionally been made using quantitative methodologies, notably survey research. Curtin and Devere, by contrast, used a qualitative methodology - focus group interviews - and their findings dispute the unambiguous categorisation of women's attitudes which have emerged from quantitative research.

It is at this point that real contention emerges in the book. Helena Catt notes in the introduction that there was controversy at the originating conference over the use of quantitative methodologies to discern "gender gaps" in women's political participation. That male researchers were the primary employers of quantitative methodologies added to the controversy.

A number of arguments over quantitative versus qualitative methodologies are rehearsed by Curtin and Devere in their essay, and by Peter Aimer in his enquiry into the presence of a "gender gap" in the responses of men and women to the 1990 NZ Election Survey. Many of the arguments (on both sides) have become increasingly familiar to political

scientists working in the area of gender politics. And, partly at least, controversy, debate, even acrimony *should* be expected about the chosen methods of research. Feminism is an ideology which critiques all sorts of orthodoxies, not least of which is the use of quantitative methodologies to uncover "truths" in social science. Survey research, especially, is perceived by many feminists to be a suspect methodology where gender issues are involved, because of a range of alleged problems: androcentrism in "objective" questionnaires; the "closed" nature of questions and limited choice of answers; and the way in which the aggregation of data de-contextualizes individual responses and masks individual opinion clusters.

Those defending quantitative methodologies, however, point to the differing ends of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Aimer uses the metaphors "maps" and "core samples" to describe the way in which researchers from each camp take information from the same source (individuals) but extract it in different ways and for differing purposes - macro level analysis for quantitative research, micro level for qualitative research.

Nevertheless, there remain tensions between the advocates of each methodology - a tension not dissipated by Aimer's assertion that qualitative research methods are "complementary, not an alternative" to quantitative methods. Qualitative researchers are, after all, unlikely to welcome being relegated exclusively to micro level analysis. Feminists, too, will continue to decry the quantitative researcher's depersonalization of information,

the stripping away of the specific for the general and the generalized. The debate will undoubtedly continue.

So, what of this book overall? Firstly, it must be said that this publication is a most welcome addition to the available literature. There has, until very recently, been a paucity of published material on women and politics in NZ. This collection of essays will help to rectify that situation.

The wide range of subject matter encompassed is also a plus. The intended audience for *Women and Politics in New Zealand* is an academic one, and both practitioners and students will find much of interest here. The book helps to define the state of NZ research in this sub-discipline, presenting new material, sketching current debates, and, importantly, indicating areas where research still remains to be done.

But it is not without flaws. In this context it should be noted that - notwithstanding Bronwyn Hayward's useful and relevant discussion on Mana Wahine Maori - there is an absence of material by and about Maori women and women of other minority communities. This is particularly marked given that one of the dominant themes of the publication is the "hiddenness" of women in political life. Women of minority groups are, of course, the most marginalised of all citizens in our polity. It is indeed a pity that their voices are not heard and their stories told in this book.

That aside, *Women and Politics in New Zealand* is a useful and timely work. From suffragettes to citizens, women have indeed come a long way over the last

century. As this book makes clear, the next hundred years will be just as challenging.

*Dr. Jane Verbitsky lectures at the Auckland Institute of Technology, teaching politics and social science in the Department of Integrated Business Studies and the School of Communication Studies.*

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## NOTICES

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### WOMEN AND POLITICS PRIZE 1995

The Women's Caucus of the Australasian Political Studies Association established the Women and Politics Prize in 1981 as part of a Caucus objective 'to promote the study of women and politics'. This Prize of A\$1000 is co-sponsored by the Institute of Public Administration (Australia) and is presented for the best essay on the topic of women and politics broadly defined (including political practice, public administration/public policy and political theory).

#### Criteria:

- Originality of argument and/or material.
- Usefulness to women involved in political practice or in relation to teaching.
- Quality of presentation.

#### Conditions of entry:

- Open to residents of Australia and NZ
- Essays should be circa 5,000 words (10,000 words absolute maximum).
- Work should be unpublished, although entries which have been accepted for publication are eligible.
- 5 copies of the MS should be submitted; all should have a title page. The author's name should not appear on the MS. The entrant's covering letter must include name, address, contact phone number and should clearly identify the MS by title.
- Entries must be received by 30 July 1995.
- They should be addressed:  
Attention: Christine Hill, Women and Politics Prize, Politics Department, University of Adelaide, GPO Box 498, Adelaide, SA 5001.

Winning or highly commended entries are normally published in either the *Australian Journal of Political Science* or the *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration*. The decision of the Judging Panel is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

#### Contact:

**Christine Hill**, Politics Department,  
University of Adelaide.  
tel: 08 3035610  
fax: 08 224 0464.

### DIRECTORY OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS IN NEW ZEALAND.

### TE RARANGI INGOA O NGA ROPU WAHINE KEI

A completely revised and updated edition of this directory has been produced by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Nearly 600 women's organisations and groups are included, along with government agencies, women's bookshops and women's studies courses. The Directory is available for \$10 (payment with orders please) from:

Ministry of Women's Affairs  
PO Box 10-049  
Wellington

Ph.(04) 473-4112  
Fax (04) 472-0961.

### THE UNIVERSITY CERTIFICATE IN WOMEN'S STUDIES - DISTANCE 1995

Centre for Continuing Education  
University of Auckland

This is a part-time undergraduate Certificate course that was first offered in 1990. In 1992 it was offered for the first time by distance education. It is of interest to women at all stages of their lives and from all backgrounds. It is also of particular relevance to teachers, counsellors, health, social and community workers, union women, women returning to or beginning tertiary study, librarians and those working in equity or equal opportunity areas.

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:  
**Helen Hagen, Course  
Administrator**  
Centre for Continuing Education  
University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019, Auckland  
tel (09) 3737599 ext 7423  
fax (09) 3737419.

**GENDER STREAM AT APSA  
CONFERENCE 1995**

Sheila Jeffreys is convening the gender stream at the Australasian Political Science Association conference in September 1995 at Melbourne University. Please start thinking about papers you would like to contribute. The suggested theme from the women's caucus is 'Women and Social Justice'. It would be helpful if papers could address this theme. Please send titles and abstracts for papers as soon as possible (but not later than 31 May) to **Sheila Jeffreys**, Department of Political Science University of Melbourne Parkville, VIC 3052. fax: 344 7906 email: jeffreys@politics.unimelb.edu.au.

**WAPSAnews**

**Australasian Political Studies  
Association Women's Caucus  
Electronic Newsletter**

If you are interested in contributing to/receiving this monthly E-mail news bulletin, please contact:  
**Elizabeth Shannon**  
E.Shannon@polsci.utas.edu.au  
Department of Political Science  
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GPO Box 252C, Hobart, Tasmania 7001.

**1995 SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR  
WOMEN AND POLITICS NETWORK**

Please send your \$10 (\$35 for institutions) subscription with the form that accompanies this newsletter as soon as possible to:

**Bronwyn Hayward**  
Aotearoa/NZ Women and Politics  
Newsletter Coordinator  
Lecturer (Public Policy)  
Department of Parks, Recreation and  
Tourism  
Lincoln University

P.O. Box 84  
Canterbury

**NEXT ISSUE OF THE  
NEWSLETTER**

The theme for the next newsletter which we hope to distribute mid-year will be 'Women in International Relations'. If you are interested in writing an article, have information for our teaching news section, a book you would like to review, or information about relevant conferences, please contact:

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**NEW MEMBERS**

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**Sue Bretherton**  
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Interests: the politics of women's health.

**Trisha Hanifin**  
Access Literacy Trust  
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Mt. Eden  
Auckland  
Interests: literacy and community  
education/social citizenship.

**Sarah Heal**  
Research Assistant  
Department of Political Studies  
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Dunedin

Interests: industrial relations/restructuring of welfare state.

**Alexandra Holley**  
Manager  
Waste Management and Rural Services  
Activity  
Manukau City Council

**Fiona McLaren**  
2 Locarno Avenue  
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parliament/management.

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Interests: public policy/women's shelters.

**Sally Simmonds**  
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Interests: The politics of parenting.

**Dr. Jane Verbitsky**  
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Interests: Women in education/business

**Dr. Suzanne Wilkinson**  
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Email: sjw@citunet.unitec.ac.nz  
Interests: Women in education/women in management

**Alison Wilson**  
16 Argyle Street  
Heme Bay  
Auckland  
Interests: media studies/cultural studies.

## CONFERENCE DIARY 1995

DATE	TITLE	PLACE	CONTACT	DETAILS
Feb. 9-11	Towards Beijing Conference	St. Alban's Campus, Victoria University of Technology, Australia	Dr. Helen Hill and Jeannie Rea, VUT. Tel: (03) 365 2298 hilhm@stamail1.vut.EDU.AU	Preparing for UN 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, Sept. 1995.
11 March	Re-defining the Pornography Debate. NSW Council for Civil Liberties	Uni of New South Wales, Sydney	Dr. Helen Pringle, School of Pol.Sci., Uni of NSW. Tel: (02) 385 2346 Fax: (02) 313 6671. Email: H.Pringle@unsw.edu.au	
May 25-29	International Communications Association	Alberquerque, New Mexico	Charles R. Berger, Department of Rhetoric and Communications, Uni of California, Davis, CA 95616, USA Tel: (916) 752 3400 Fax: 916 752 6705 h.clark@waikato.ac.nz	Too late to submit papers. Conference theme 'Communications and Reality'.
July 2-4	Education and the Equality of the Sexes	Uni of Waikato, Hamilton		Revisiting discussions at 1975 Conference in Wellington
August	New Zealand Political Studies Association Conference	Victoria University of Wellington	Nigel Roberts or Stephen Levine	No other details yet available.
Sept. 1995	1995 World Women's Conference	Beijing	NZ Non-Governmental Organisations Coordinating Committee: Beijing 1995, P.O.Box. 12-117, Wellington	
Aug 30-Sept 8	NGO Forum on Women - Beijing 1995	Beijing Workers Sports Services Centre	NGO Forum on Women's Office, Suite 1500, 211 East 43 Street, New York, NY 10017, USA	Parallel program to UN World Women's Conference. Registration by 30 April.

Sept 26-29	Australasian Political Science Association Conference	Melbourne University	Sheila Jeffreys, Dept. of Pol. Sci., Uni of Melbourne, Parkville, VIC 3052 Email: jeffreys@politics.unimelb.edu.au (gender stream)	Suggested theme for gender stream "Women and Social Justice" Abstracts by 31 May.
Nov 17-19	Feminism/Postmodernism /Postfeminism	Massey University, Palmerston North	Dr. Lynne Alice/Dr. Lynne Star, Women's Studies, Massey Uni, Box 11-222, Palmerston North. Tel: (06) 350 4417 Fax: (06) 350 4425 Email: L.C.Alice@massey.ac.nz	Three thematic threads: 1. critiques of epistemology; 2. politics of power; 3. hybrid bodies. Only 12 papers will be selected. Deadline 16 July; Register by 1 Oct.
NO DETAILS AVAILABLE	New Zealand Politics Research Group Conference			





