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## Teaching Gender and Politics: Feminist Methods in Political Science

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Feminist research in political science is marked by two major contributions: (1) introducing the concept of "gender" and (2) expanding the definition of "politics." Given its origins in feminist theory and activism, it is guided by scholarly and political aims to transform the study and the practice of politics (cf. Hawkesworth 2006). These commitments enable feminist scholars to identify new research questions, as well as to approach traditional topics in novel ways, using a variety of research tools. However, rethinking the content and methods of political analysis has important implications for how to teach political science by raising questions about what political scientists study and how and why they study these particular topics. It also poses certain challenges, or presents new opportunities, for political science pedagogy by compelling professors to devise innovative techniques for communicating material and fostering self-reflection among students, who may resist or embrace central tenets of feminism. To explore how

feminist scholars have met these challenges, this article examines 45 syllabi for courses on women, gender, and politics taught at various universities in the United States and Western Europe between 2002 and 2008.<sup>1</sup> The analysis begins with a short introduction to trends in gender and politics research and interdisciplinary debates on feminist research methods. It then takes a closer look at the syllabi to illuminate some shared features of course content, as well as to make note of course readings, formats, and assignments that reflect feminist commitments to learning and personal transformation. The goal is to raise awareness of feminist tools and teaching techniques as a means for assessing their potential contributions for other areas of political science.

### **Research on Women, Gender, and Politics**

Feminism is often defined as the belief in the social, economic, and political equality of women and men. However, there are in fact a variety of feminist approaches, which differ in terms of how they conceptualize and seek to alter the status quo.<sup>2</sup> Liberal feminists focus mainly on equality, seeking to gain rights for women that are already guaranteed to men. They argue that achieving concrete gains requires engaging with formal politics. They contend that although this sphere has traditionally been dominated by men, there is nothing inherent about this domination. For this reason, they anticipate that as more women enter the public realm, the gendered nature of politics and public policy can be overcome to create equality for all. Radical feminists, in contrast, emphasize difference, aiming to focus on and value women as women, rather than as individuals who aspire to a male standard. As such, they are more skeptical about the value of participating in “politics as usual,” which they argue is inherently patriarchal and thus could never be employed to pursue feminist ends. They prefer political strategies that revalue the feminine, foster solidarity among women, and raise awareness of women’s experiences through collective consciousness-raising. Postmodern feminists are also interested in difference, but focus more on how categories like “women” and “men” are represented through discourse. Theorizing the fluid and relational aspects of identity and experience, they stress contradictions and multiplicities in definitions of “women” and “women’s issues.” While this approach avoids the charges of essentialism that have been directed towards liberal and radical feminism, it also has the effect of undermining the prospects for mobilizing by women as women for social, economic, and political change.

Feminism thus poses varied challenges to existing modes of political analysis. All the same, the research that falls under this rubric shares roughly similar goals to incorporate gender, expand politics, and promote change. The concept of “gender” is often considered the key contribution of feminism as an intellectual and political project. Although often elided with “women” in popular and scholarly discourse, feminists are careful to distinguish between “sex,” biological differences between women and men, and “gender,” the social meanings given to these distinctions. A shift to gender has two broad implications for political research: (1) it moves the analytical focus away from biological sex, which treats men and women

as binary opposites, to constructed gender identities, which view masculinity and femininity as features that exist along a continuum, often in combination with other identities, and (2) it replaces exclusive concern with women in politics and public policy with attention to the impact of masculinities and femininities, as well as relations between men and women, on political inputs and outcomes (Krook and Childs 2009). Given women’s ongoing exclusion, focusing on “women” remains crucial for mapping patterns of political access, behaviors, and effects. However, theories of gender offer a chance to delve more deeply into these dynamics by bringing men into the analysis as well, thereby making the subject of investigation the role of masculinities and femininities, and the relative status of men and women, in the conduct of political life.

A second concern of feminists is to broaden existing definitions of what is meant by “politics.” Political scientists tend to use this term to refer to formal processes and institutions of government and elections. Women’s movement activism in recent decades, however, has inspired feminists to theorize at least two additional meanings. One group expands its range to encompass informal politics and the dynamics of everyday life. Some scholars insist, for example, that social movements are a form of political participation on par with engagement inside the state (Beckwith 2005). At the same time, others draw attention to the power dynamics that permeate all levels of social life, including relations within the private sphere of home and family. Echoing the slogan of second wave feminism, they argue that “the personal is political” (Okin 1979). A second group, together with postmodern theorists, has adopted a notion of “politics” as any instance or manifestation of power relations (Butler 1990). As a result, they are interested not only in the politics of the state and the politics of social movements, but also the politics of language, the politics of exchange, and the politics of representation, which they have analyzed using a wide variety of research tools.

Both of these feminist innovations have come under challenge in recent years. On the one hand, there has been increased recognition of the ways in which multiple facets of identity may interact to shape not only personal interactions but also large-scale political outcomes. In these debates, scholars have offered various schemes for analyzing how the dynamics of gender shape and are shaped by other patterns of inequality based on race, class, sexuality, ability, and other features (Hancock 2007; Weldon 2006). On the other hand, increased globalization, combined with decentralization, has posed major challenges to traditional configurations of political organization. As a consequence, “politics” is now an even more diffuse entity, with new and developing arrangements that are not yet well understood (Krook and Childs 2009). Understanding both sets of trends is crucially important for the third main element of feminist research: a commitment to political change. Although feminists of various types espouse diverse goals, they converge on the opinion that research should contribute to some type of positive transformation, whether this entails the broad empowerment of women as a group or the deconstruction of gendered categories in politics and public policy.

## **Perspectives on Feminist Research Methods**

The political goals of feminism, while central to the ethos of this line of research, have been used on occasion as an argument against feminist scholarship on the grounds that it fails to be “objective,” as such motives interfere with the discovery of “truth” (Hammersley and Gomm 1997). In response to such critiques, feminist epistemologists argue for recognizing the situated and partial nature of all knowledge claims. Yet, there are ongoing debates as to whether there are specifically feminist research methods, ranging from broad acceptance of existing tools, a position known as “feminist empiricism” (Harding 1986), to various attempts to explore and devise new methods of analysis (Hesse-Biber et al. 2007). Although qualitative methods are often associated more closely with feminist research, some insist that feminist work can and should utilize both quantitative and qualitative techniques (Jayaratne and Stewart 1991; Oakley 1998). This has led scholars to suggest that there are no feminist methods, but that there is one feminist methodology (Reinharz 1992). Said in another way, feminists may employ many different research techniques in their quest for evidence, but share an approach to collecting and evaluating this evidence. This methodology is said to be “distinctive to the extent that it is shaped by feminist theory, politics, and ethics and is grounded in women’s experience” (Ramazanoglu with Holland 2002: 16). A survey of feminist methods texts indicates that it comprises four main elements: paying attention to “gender,” challenging norms of objectivity and incorporating subjectivity into research, trying to avoid exploiting women as subjects and objects of knowledge, and empowering women in various ways through research (Acker, Barry, and Esseveld 1996; Fonow and Cook 2005; Harding 1987).

As these goals are sufficiently broad, many different research techniques may be employed in a manner consistent with feminist values. At the same time, some of these concerns overlap with other approaches to social investigation, especially those that seek to question existing “truths.” What make feminist studies distinctive are their efforts to adapt many of the same methods as other researchers in ways that make them more consistent with feminist concerns. In the use of interview techniques, for example, feminists have often been careful to involve research subjects in the construction of data about their own lives. In the process, they have become conscious of particular challenges inherent in generating feminist insights—or simply remaining consistent with feminist goals—when interviewing across age, race, class, gender, and political differences. Feminists have also discussed ways in which other techniques may be employed to feminist ends: archival research—or even starting a group’s own archive—can help promote knowledge of many different kinds of women; internet research can reach women who are geographically dispersed but “virtually” connected in order to study how they share knowledge or mobilize collectively; content analysis can provide insights into discursive and visual representations of gender through non-traditional research materials like artwork and other cultural artifacts; and surveys and statistical analyses can reveal that gender inequalities do

in fact exist, affording crucial leverage for feminist activists in their efforts to influence public policy (cf. Fonow and Cook 2005; Gottfried 1996).

In other cases, feminist researchers create new methods in the pursuit of better knowledge of gender relations. The quintessential method of this type is consciousness-raising, a crucial tool in second-wave feminism, which typically involves small groups of individuals who meet to discuss their personal experiences. These gatherings, which may also take the form of “speak-outs” and “write-ins,” help participants recognize the hidden and taken-for-granted aspects of their lives that enable personal transformation and provide insights for devising strategies for change. Other techniques have been invented in the course of asking questions whose answers are difficult to access through traditional methods. These include dramatization through role play, which allows research subjects to collaborate in research and to find their own voice; conversation, which presents multiple voices as a way of gathering and displaying data; identification, which “breathes life” into the person being studied through the personal reflections of the scholar doing the study; structured conceptualization, which entails synthesizing information in the form of a map in order to display how ideas are related to one another; photography, which compiles images of the research subjects to tell a visual story of their lives and experiences, sometimes involving their participation in the presentation of findings; and taped self-interviews, which enable respondents to answer questions at their convenience in the privacy of their own homes (for a list of details and examples, see Reinhartz 1992). These solutions, combined with extensive feminist adaptations of existing techniques, suggest—contrary to the conventional wisdom—that there may in fact be a number of feminist research methods, consistent with different definitions of “feminism” and various feminist goals in the research process.

## **Feminist Methods in Political Science**

Feminist discussions of methods and methodologies have implications for the substance and goals of political research done in a feminist vein. These, in turn, have ramifications for how scholars teach political science, in relation to the content and the pedagogical techniques used in courses on women, gender, and politics. The 45 syllabi examined for this article cover a range of topics in American politics, comparative politics, and international relations. They were collected from public and private institutions, undergraduate and graduate courses, and male and female professors. Attention was paid to course descriptions, readings, formats, and assignments to discern whether, how, and to what extent feminist ideas and concerns were integrated into course material. This review reveals that instructors, as reflected in the syllabi, did seek to introduce students to new ways of understanding the political world through gendered lenses, often drawing on work using a variety of different research methods. More interestingly, however, many courses also utilized one or more innovative teaching techniques to (1) engage students with developments in the “real world” and (2) equip them with new

skills and insights to facilitate personal transformation and empowerment.

### **Course Content**

An analysis of the syllabi indicates that professors in all courses endeavor to introduce students to new ways of “doing” political science. Consistent with feminist literature in the field more generally, they familiarize students with the concept of “gender,” enlarge the scope of what is considered to be “political,” and offer insights into possible strategies for political “change.” Many of these courses begin with a section on feminism and gender theory. Providing an overview of diverse feminist approaches, they emphasize “gender” as a social construct that has a range of important implications for political life, starting with the tendency to associate men with the public sphere and women with the private. Many U.S.-based courses, in particular, also make conscious efforts to recognize diversity among women by incorporating attention to race, class, and sexuality. A key aim is to bring a gender perspective into an array of topics in political science, exploring the limits of existing paradigms and literatures. In many cases, this entails calling attention to women as subjects and objects of public policy, noting the various roles that women have played as political actors and the often distinct impact that otherwise neutral-sounding policies may have on women versus men. A large number of courses address these dynamics by highlighting gaps between women and men in terms of their voting and legislative behavior. Some also focus on women’s experiences as a means to explore how women may draw on norms of femininity in unanticipated ways, for example by pointing to their skills as mothers to assert their suitability for leadership roles. The intent in all instances is to analyze how gender operates in the political realm and, as a consequence, rethink and reconceptualize political concepts through a feminist lens.

A second feature of these courses is a shared effort to address, but also go beyond, the confines of formal politics. Seeking to break down the public/private divide, many instructors draw attention to the partial nature of how “politics” has been studied, in some cases by quoting the feminist slogan: “the personal is political.” To this end, they point to the neglected experiences and arguments of women to expand the range of actors and issues understood to be relevant to political debate. Nearly all courses include a section on women’s social movement organizing and participation in other voluntary sector activities. A key reason for this is historical: women have largely been excluded from other arenas of political participation, like elections, political office, and international politics. In addition, while formal barriers, like the lack of suffrage, have been overcome in most countries, women still occupy relatively few top-level political positions. As a consequence, a great deal of research on women and politics has focused on women’s activities in civil society. Most courses, however, also address a range of different types of formal political participation, examining trends in women as voters, party activists, candidates, and elected officials. Further, a sizeable number of courses extend the realm of “poli-

tics” to the media, the judiciary, bureaucratic agencies of the state, and various types of international organizations. In a similar set of moves, many courses cover a range of issues often associated with women, like equality law, educational equity, workplace and family issues, health, reproductive rights, and violence against women. However, at the same time, there is also an increasing tendency to include issues not traditionally viewed through a gender lens, like human rights, development, trade, migration, nationalism, national security, war, and science and technology.

A third notable element of course content is discussion of efforts to promote political change. One syllabus, indeed, describes the course in question as “subversive and reconstructive” and frames it explicitly as an “intellectual and political journey.” The aim, according to the instructor, is not only to expose the limits of conventional modes of political analysis, but also to move from describing the world to thinking about how to reconstitute these realities. This goal is attempted via several distinct course designs. The majority of courses focus on politics in a single country, like the U.S., but many also include some degree of cross-national comparison as a means to (1) raise students’ awareness of distinct trends elsewhere and (2) explore why change has occurred in some countries but not in others. While crucial for improved knowledge of political processes, exposure to such information is also intended to foster the ability to imagine an alternative to the status quo. Another technique involves introducing students to particular strategies that have been developed around the globe to empower women and create more gender-sensitive public policy. Instructors in these courses include units on gender quotas, policies to increase the selection of female candidates to political office, and gender mainstreaming, an approach to policy-making that requires considering the gendered implications of all public policies. They also draw attention to actors who have played important roles in advancing gender equality, both expected, like movement activists, and less expected, like state bureaucrats. A final approach is to brainstorm and introduce scholarly evidence as to how political life might change, or not, with the greater inclusion of women. Discussions highlight the stakes to maintaining the status quo, but also encourage students to consider possible limits to change, for example by noting that the increased presence of women is not always associated with dramatic shifts in policy outcomes.

### **Course Methodology**

Paralleling debates on feminist research methods, the readings used in gender and politics courses reflect a range of different methods and methodologies. While none of the syllabi surveyed assign books or articles on research methods, or even address questions related to the philosophy of science in their reading lists, almost all include a session or more on the concepts of “sex” and “gender” and an overview of different types of “feminism.” Many instructors take care to emphasize diversity across feminist approaches, noting that these present distinct frameworks for understanding and analyzing dynamics of gender, politics, and change. As such,

many syllabi trace the development of feminist thinking, as well as outline ongoing feminist debates, on a particular topic. The result is that courses tend to offer insights into the distinctiveness of feminist analysis, at the same time that they recognize the multiplicity of feminist contributions to political science.

In terms of the more specific methods employed in the readings, what is striking about these courses is their openness to studies using a variety of different research tools. Although some textbooks are assigned, including Conway, Ahern, and Steuernagel (2005), Harrison (2003), and Paxton and Hughes (2007), the vast majority of readings are taken from articles and book chapters (but see Krook and Childs 2009). In general, the choice of methods in each text is related to the topic under investigation: archival analyses and ethnographies prevail in studies of women's movements, elite interviews and statistical analyses of cross-national data when the subject is women in parliaments, surveys when the question relates to elite and public opinion, and textual analysis in work on law and public policy. In many cases, several methods are used in conjunction with one another. These patterns may appear surprising to some, given that feminist research is often seen as having a preference for qualitative methods. This is due to perceived difficulties in operationalizing "gender" as a variable for quantitative analysis. While "sex" can be recorded as a simple dichotomous measure, such an assertion is controversial among some feminists, who argue that "sex" too is socially constructed, and as such, should also be understood as existing along a continuum of identity (cf. Butler 1990).

Yet, perhaps one of the most notable features of feminist work is its "problem-driven" nature: a recent review discovers a distinctive willingness on the part of feminists to employ various theoretical frames and to explore possibilities for synthesizing or juxtaposing methods in innovative ways (Krook and Squires 2006). As such, the diversity of methods employed in the readings assigned in gender and politics courses simply provides a reflection of the eclectic tools that feminist researchers have used in their pursuit of better knowledge of the political world. All the same, there are several methods which appear to be less prevalent across these courses as a whole, including game theory and rational choice, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), and interpretive methods. These tools have been used in gender and politics research, but tend to be less common. Thus, it is not surprising that such readings are rarely assigned in these courses. However, it is crucial to emphasize that these patterns do not necessarily stem from their ontological and epistemological incompatibilities with feminist research. Rather, the tendency to use some methods more than others is more likely connected to the fact that there is still much to be explored with regard to the gendered nature of political life.

Finally, it is worth noting that some of the materials assigned in the courses reviewed do not simply rely on traditional "readings." Some instructors ask students to read novels and watch films for later discussion in class, primarily—it is assumed—as a means to capture the complexities of women's

(and sometimes men's) lived experiences. A large number of courses also require students to consult and reflect upon a range of different primary sources. These include, most commonly, internet links to online materials like reports from international organizations; websites of feminist and human rights NGOs; and databases on policies and statistics related to women, gender, and politics. Depending on the focus of the course in question, they may also entail newspaper articles and opinion pieces on current events; interviews transcribed in a book or available recorded online; court cases and decisions; texts in political theory, especially in relation to questions of political representation; and political biographies and autobiographies. Assigning materials such as these requires students to offer their own analyses and interpretations of gendered political events.

### **Course Pedagogy**

The intellectual and political commitments of feminism, in turn, have an impact on course instruction. In some instances, a feminist philosophy is explicitly spelled out, as with one professor who writes: "As a feminist teacher, I am committed to a mode of learning that is shared and collaborative." It is the case that most courses do make use of conventional teaching formats, like giving lectures, showing films, inviting guest speakers, holding seminars, and conducting email discussions. They also have assignments similar to those in other political science courses, like take-home and in-class exams, research papers, book reviews, and short reflection papers on course readings. Nonetheless, the syllabi analyzed here reveal that many instructors also incorporate more unusual teaching formats and course assignments. Reflecting feminist interest in political change and empowerment, several take specific steps to connect the materials introduced inside the classroom to the "real world." This involves providing students with opportunities to literally go outside the classroom by offering information about internships, arranging meetings with congressional staffers, watching politics "in action" by attending a local party women's conference, and engaging in "service learning" by tutoring local refugee women. It also entails transforming the outside world into the classroom by inviting various political women in to discuss their experiences and paths to political office. A related strategy is to require students to bring in news articles for class discussion, using these new items to link the theories and concepts introduced in class to help students better understand and analyze recent political developments.

A second major trend, as indicated in the syllabi, is to use course assignments as a means for cultivating new skills and encouraging personal transformation. This is accomplished through a series of diverse and original course activities and requirements. Several courses include training sessions on how to run for elected office. In some cases, this entails inviting guest speakers who offer advice on how to get involved in politics as activists, campaign workers, and candidates. In others, students learn specific political skills, like doing background research, preparing speeches, making presentations, training in giving television and radio interviews, writing op-

ed pieces and blog entries, and engaging in effective networking. Other courses focus on improving students' communication skills by scheduling tasks that require them to synthesize and articulate arguments related to gender and politics. In some instances, the assignment is oriented toward the collective: several instructors plan in-class debates, either formal *tête-a-têtes* or more informal group discussions, for which students receive some background readings and orienting questions to prepare. In some courses, the assignment is more individually based: students are asked to make oral presentations that summarize the readings as a means for initiating and leading a class discussion, or—perhaps more dauntingly—to offer a five-minute speech to the class about the importance of women's political participation, representation, and leadership.

Other assignments are more writing-based. One instructor requires students to write a short advocacy paper making a case for a specific government policy on an issue affecting women. A variation used by other professors is to ask students to write an op-ed or letter to the editor on an issue of the students' choice, with the intent to influence policy-making. Another project assigned in several courses is elite interviewing. One course calls for students to interview a woman active in influencing policy on women, presumably with the goal of helping students understand how policy-making "works" and what the constraints and opportunities are for women to act on behalf of women as a group. Another instructor requires students to conduct separate interviews with one man and one woman in the same leadership position. Students are then to write a paper reflecting on if and how men and women lead differently in these positions. By making the question of "difference" an empirical question, rather than a theoretical given, this assignment encourages students to grapple with the concept of "gender" in a real world laboratory, pushing them to consider when and where it may be relevant—or not.

A final example is one of the most common assignments across the syllabi surveyed. At its most basic, this task involves doing research and analyzing the profiles and experiences of individual female politicians. It appears in a number of different versions. In some courses, students are asked to write a review of a book, selected from a list of biographies and autobiographies of political women. Another professor requires students to keep a weekly journal of a female leader, living or dead. If the woman is still alive, students are to follow current events, keep clippings, and discuss successes and failures. If the figure is historical, students need to find and analyze as many original sources as possible. A second variation of this assignment is to write a background paper on a female member of Congress, focusing on her professional background, personal history, issue priorities, and committee allocations. A closely related alternative is to construct a biography of a female leader, anywhere around the world, which discusses her upbringing, her rise to power and the context in which it occurred, and some of the important events and decisions she made during her tenure in office. In some instances, students are obliged to draw explicit links between these findings and various themes introduced in the course. In others,

they are required to follow and analyze ongoing election campaigns. One instructor asks students to focus on a competitive House or Senate campaign involving a female candidate, comparing the strategies and behavior of the woman and her male opponent. Another directs students to use a combination of academic readings and newspaper reports to develop a profile of the candidate and evaluate her race in relation to the literature on female candidates. Taken together, these assignments seek to give students a greater understanding of how women might attain political office, as well as what types of barriers to political parity still remain.

## Conclusions

Feminist research and teaching in political science is thus marked by efforts to produce better knowledge of the political world, as well as to engage in a broader project of political transformation at both individual and collective levels. Some instructors explicitly recognize that such goals may not be easily achieved. Indeed, one even acknowledges on the first page of the syllabus that this may be a "controversial and even painful course" for some students, in that it is likely to challenge their prevailing views of the world around them. Although feminist aims are themselves diverse, the review of syllabi undertaken here indicates that there are perceptible trends in how courses on women, gender, and politics are designed to reflect the intellectual and political goals of academic feminism. This includes a distinctive willingness to utilize a range of different research methods, in pursuit of answers to different types of questions in feminist political science. Yet, the attention given in these courses to personal transformation and empowerment, in particular, is notable for its attempts to bridge scholarly writings and political developments outside the classroom. Together with the feminist stance on the need to engage in "problem-driven" research, this approach to teaching and learning may offer novel lessons for other scholars, who struggle with how to make politics "real" and "relevant" for their students. Features of feminist research and teaching might thus be understood as a model of "good practice," instructive for many other courses offered in political science.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to Amy Mazur and Gary Goertz for compiling this collection of syllabi.

<sup>2</sup> There are many ways to categorize various feminist approaches. This article discusses only three, but other variants include socialist feminism, maternal feminism, and Black feminism, to name but a few.

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## Symposium: Conceptualizing and Ethnic Identity

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### *Measuring the State's Institutionalization of Ethnic Categories across Time and Space*

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In this article, we describe a research strategy for measuring the degree of state institutionalization of ethnic categories across time and space, and we present some preliminary data associated with this work. Our approach is both qualitative and quantitative: we attempt to unearth and to carefully classify key historical facts and texts, and also to develop calibrated numerical indices. Because our work is ongoing, we hope that this article may stimulate suggestions for revisions to our approach to conceptualization and measurement.

We take seriously the currently dominant constructivist theoretical understanding of ethnic identification, recognizing the political activation of such identities as a phenomenon to be explained with reference to discrete historical events and processes, not merely as "givens." This theoretical orientation has prevailed in large part because of the outstanding detailed studies by political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, and historians who offered theoretically compelling accounts of the ways in which state institutions have been

central to the development of ethnic identities (Anderson 1996, Gellner 1983, Barth 1969, Laitin 1986, Marx 1998). Meanwhile, on a quite distinctive track, a large body of research pioneered by economists, but also vigorously pursued by political scientists, has been concerned with estimating the consequences of ethnic diversity for a range of substantively important outcomes, including rates of economic growth, government policy, and patterns of violence (e.g., Easterly and Levine 1997, Fearon and Laitin 2003). However, as has been widely noted (see, for example, Chandra 2001)—and we will not repeat such critiques here—the quantitative analyses associated with this latter body of research have rested almost entirely on data that reflect little incorporation of constructivist insights. And yet, the compelling nature of that research program has led many scholars, including several of the contributors to this symposium, to attempt to develop new approaches to conceptualization and measurement, with the hopes that we may yield more valid assessments of the causes and consequences of this ethnic identification and mobilization.

We believe that the unique contribution of the project described will be to systematically incorporate the insights from earlier scholarship on state institutions in a manner that allows us to carry out broader comparative analyses across time and space. Although we certainly recognize that state institutions are not the only relevant factors in the construction of ethnic identities, we believe that a number of studies have compellingly demonstrated the key role played by these institutions, warranting this type of expanded investigation. Our goal is to investigate the history of state institutions on a country-by-country basis, generating a rich database of both specific historical facts and the development of an Institution-